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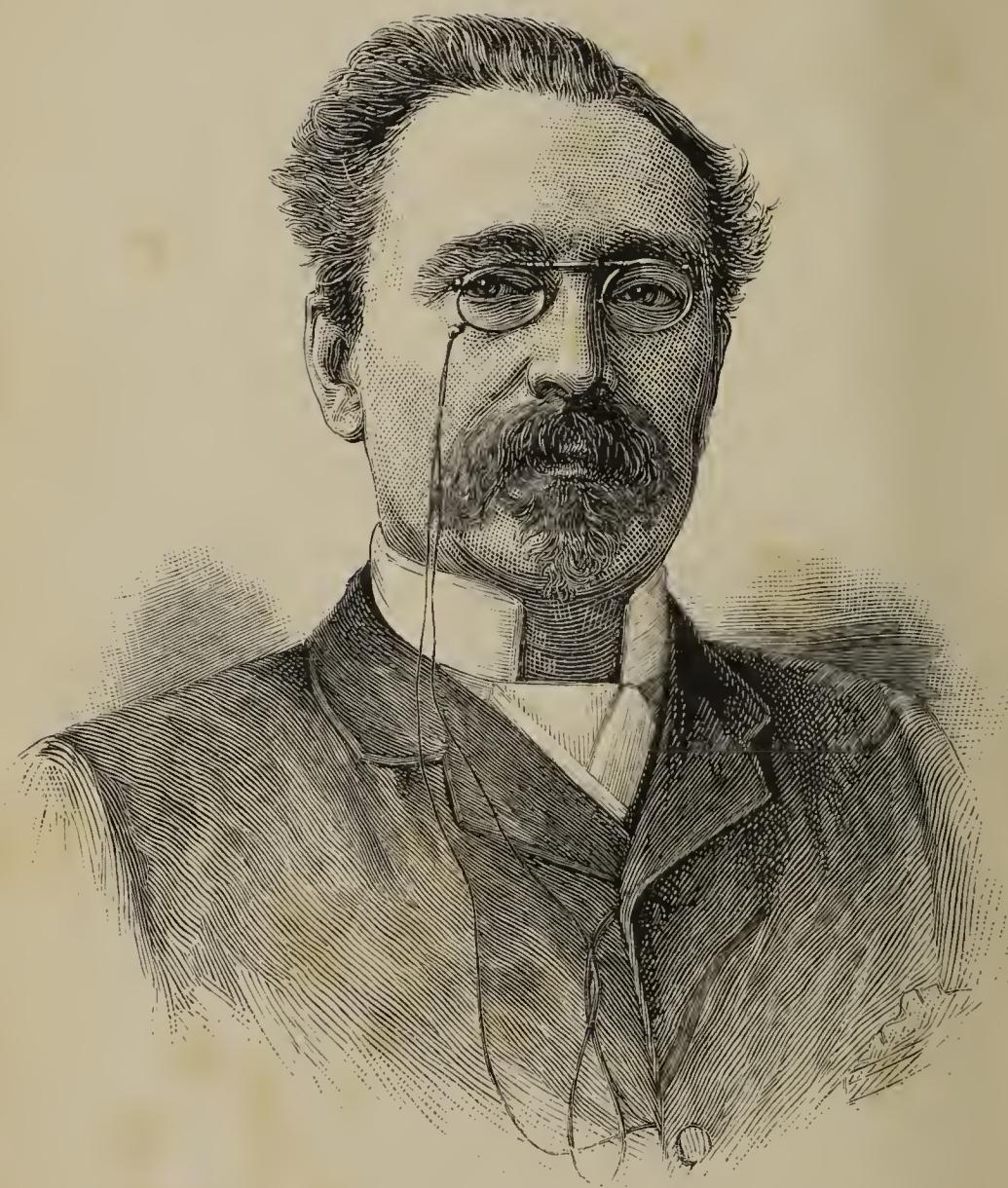
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**ACPL ITEM
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MR. CHAS. COOK.

THE
PRISONS OF THE WORLD.
WITH STORIES OF
CRIME,
CRIMINALS,
AND CONVICTS.

BY
CHAS. COOK.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY C. H. SPURGEON.

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P R E F A C E .

FOR many years I have been interested in criminals, and when I first entered a foreign gaol, and learned that the inmates were not provided with the Word of God, I endeavoured to supply them with it.

While pursuing my labours in this direction, I found many prisoners suffering unjustly, or lacking food. In the one case I could not but protest, sympathise, and help ; in the other I was bound to provide.

The following pages are a record of my journeys and experiences in the Prison World ; and an account of prisoners, with the treatment they receive in most civilised countries.

Remarks made by friends who have heard my lectures on the subject, or who have read the articles I have from time to time contributed to *The Christian*, have led me to think that a more detailed and comprehensive account would not prove unacceptable. It will be evident that there has been no attempt at literary finish ; I have but given a simple description of sufferings seen, of reforms needed, and of work accomplished.

Meanwhile I shall be glad to deliver lectures on this subject, illustrated by costumes of the different countries through which I have travelled, or by dissolving views which I have obtained abroad. Friends who are interested in the above will perhaps correspond with me.

CHAS. COOK.

6, FRITHVILLE GARDENS,
SHEPHERD'S BUSH, W.,
September 1891.

INTRODUCTION.

JOHN HOWARD, of Bedford, went forth under the impulse of humanity—and, I think, under the guidance of God's Spirit—to visit the dungeons and the prisons of Europe. You know how he spent his life in going from one gaol to another, and at last died of a fever which he had taken in gaol, and passed away to his rest. He exposed things which had not been known, and he set in clearer light things that were known, but which had been thought tolerable, and had been winked at; and he commenced a great reform in prison life, which has been carried on to this day. I do not think that every alteration has been an improvement; but certainly the prisons of one hundred years ago were very, very different from what they are to-day. There is room for improvement still, even in our own country; and I especially call to mind the fact that if any one were charged with any crime of which he might be perfectly innocent, yet there is no room in which he would be put as an innocent man, but he would be mingled with the guilty, which I hold to be a treason to every honest man, and it ought to be rectified as soon as possible. There are other things which are constantly being brought to light with regard to the mismanagement

of our prisons, but there is a healthy public sentiment abroad, which I believe will not allow anything that is desperately bad long to remain. In countries which Mr. Cook has visited there is often an absence of any such sentiment. Yet, if things are more exposed to light in civilised Europe, that cannot live long. Even a Turk cannot be a Turk while there are English people and others about to tell him what they think of him. Everywhere, I trust, there is so much power about the Christian religion, that if the blaze of Christian light once falls upon an intolerable evil, it will continue to expose it until it dies. I feel very glad, therefore, that Mr. Cook took it into his head to go and visit prisons. I know him as an evangelist at Hyde Park, preaching there. I have had to know him through some persons who have been converted there, and who have afterwards come to join the Church at the Tabernacle ; and I have felt very grateful that God has put him to work in that part of London. I have also had sympathy from him in time of trouble, for which I have felt grateful. *He is the Howard of the day*, and I call earnest attention to his remarkable work. May our Lord greatly bless him ! I feel that it is quite a proper time now, that any one who can tell us anything about prisons in Spain, or Algiers, or Egypt,—Eastern prisons,—should tell it to us all, that we may all know about it, and that the papers may know about it, and that the world may know about it, so that if there be any cruelty hidden away, it may be exposed to light ; and the very exposure is the best means of removing it.

I wish to him good health in his journeys, and that when he comes out of a sickening prison he may soon get over it. It is not the nicest thing in all the world to

go into a place full of filth, full of vermin,—which is a more horrible thing than filth,—sometimes full of fever, and other pestilential diseases. It is not a very handsome way of spending a holiday ; but Mr. Cook has spent his holidays so, and he has taken the Word of God with him whenever he gets a chance of any person receiving it. I hope that all who know Mr. Cook will become so interested in prisons, that they will wish to help him in this good work of carrying the Word of God to those who have no other comfort, and of endeavouring, as well, to break away their chains, and give them as much hope, and light, and comfort, as can be given to men shut up when charged with crime, many of them waiting for trial year after year, and yet never tried ; and who may be as innocent as we are, but are yet kept in prison, waiting the good pleasure of some despot who has not time, just now, to attend to prisoners, and set them free ; but is amusing himself with some freak of his own will, instead of minding his business.

C. H. SPURGEON.



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THE PRISONS OF THE WORLD.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

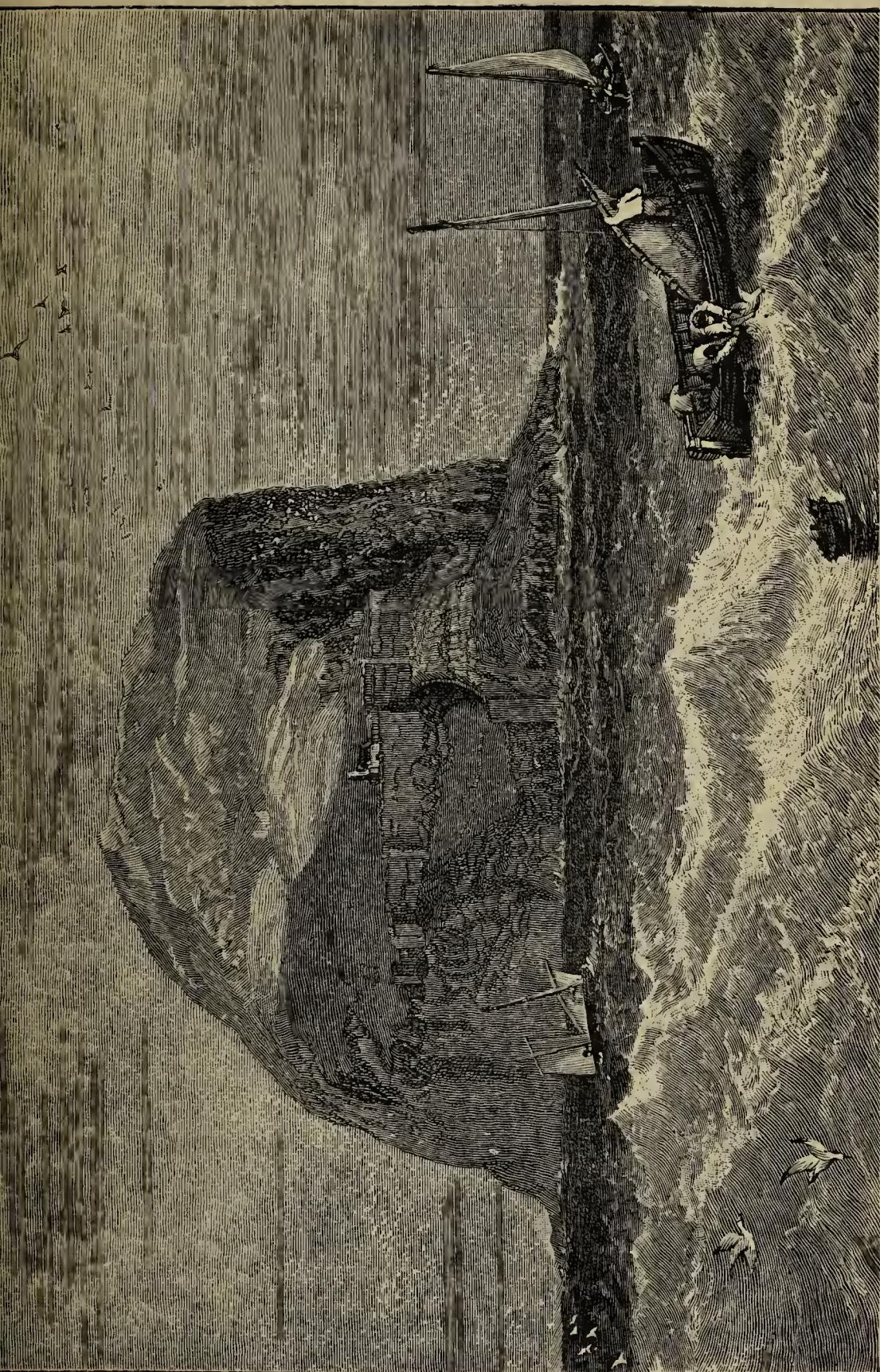
HISTORIC PRISONS—PAST AND PRESENT.

WHAT memories hang about some of these places ! What were the feelings, thoughts, and sufferings of those who were imprisoned in them ? What miseries endured ! What tears have been shed ‘like drops of blood from wounded hearts’ ! Such thoughts have passed through my mind as I have passed through the prisons of the Inquisition of Venice and Spain. What tales could *they* tell of persecution and bloodshed and torture ! And what shall be said of the CONCIERGERIE OF PARIS (only surpassed in notoriety by the dreaded Bastille of a century ago). This was the prison of the palace when it was used as a royal residence, and is still used as a prison. As I walked through its classic corridors that told of the times of the Revolution, I remembered that Marie Antoinette spent some two or three months there, and only left it for the scaffold ; and noted also is it as being the place where Robespierre was immured. Gloomy and dreadful are its portals ; solemn and sorrowful are the recollections it awakens. One other place in Paris calls for a moment’s notice, La Roquette,

the Newgate of Paris, where the Communists shot the Archbishop and his colleagues, and outside of which, when an execution takes place in the early morn, is seen such a sight as only Paris could furnish. One recollects seeing a public execution in London, but for noise and numbers, revellings and riotings, blasphemy and sin, the scene outside Newgate was not nearly so bad as can be seen in 1891 outside La Roquette.

Who can gaze upon the Bass Rock in the Firth of Forth without feelings of admiration for the brave sons of Scotland who languished in prison there? Byron spent a day in one of the dungeons of Venice for inspiration; and I confess it was the memories of brave men—those Covenanters of old—that led me to sail round this historic Isle a summer or two ago. Its height is stupendous, though less than the sixth of a mile in diameter. A fresh breeze had sprung up, which made it difficult to land, whilst thousands upon thousands of sea-fowl were disturbed as we neared the edge. A cavern runs through the centre of the Rock from north-west to south-east. It was formerly the property of a private family of the name of Lander, but Charles the Second in 1671 purchased it; during whose reign, and that of his brother James the Second, it was made a state prison, where the Cameronians were confined for taking up arms against the King.

In the reign of Elizabeth, Lambeth Palace was frequently used as a prison; Tunstal, Bishop of Durham, and Thirleby, Bishop of Ely, deprived of their sees after the death of Mary, were here imprisoned, and here also they died, and were buried in the adjoining church. The Earl of Essex was also confined here for a short time, previously to his being sent to the Tower. This venerable palace, as well as its owners, has experienced many reverses of fortune. In 1381, during the insurrection of Wat Tyler, when Simon of Sudbury, the Archbishop, was put to death, this building was very much injured by the insurgents. But the LOLLARDS' TOWER, so called from



THE BASS ROCK.

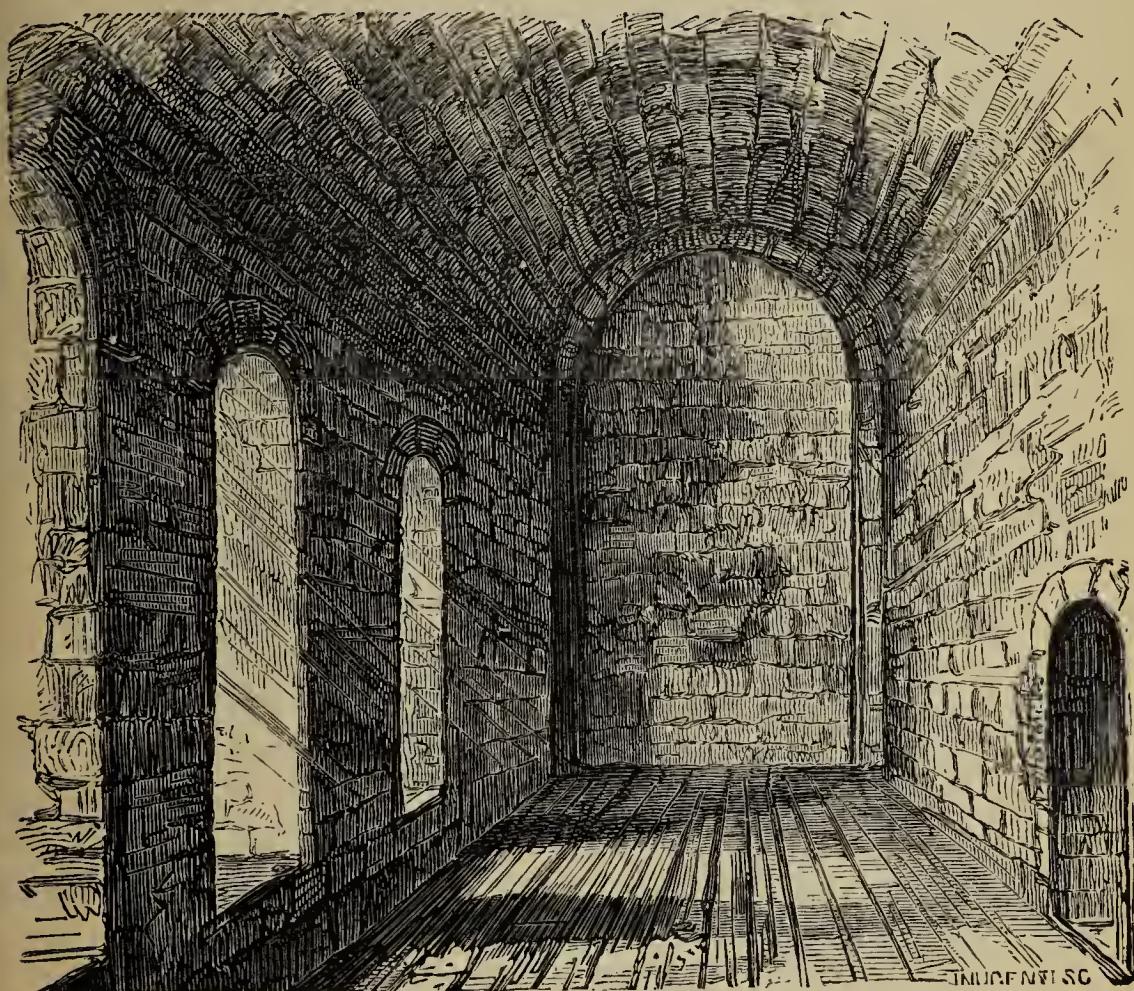
its having been the place of confinement for the persecuted followers of Wickliffe, is to me the most interesting part of the palace. It is a massive building of stone; and was reared by the bigoted Henry Chicheley in 1435.

I climbed one day to the topmost story of the Tower, and entered the apartment where the brave reformers, the Lollards, had been imprisoned. It is a small room, wainscotted with oak, on which many broken sentences and initials are rudely carved,—the work of lonely captives in silent hours of solitude and sadness. I noticed a number of large iron rings in the walls and floor, which were used for securing the inmates; true mementoes of the bigotry of former days.

For historic interest, however, no place (at least for Englishmen) can compare with the Tower of London, which was for centuries a royal palace and a state prison. As a palace, the early history of the Tower is, in fact, the history of the English Court. Almost from the Conquest to the expulsion of the Stuart dynasty, the Tower was used as a royal palace. But what makes it of greater interest—sad and sorrowful as the memories are, base and bloody as the dark deeds of the past were—is the fact that for eight hundred years it was the great state prison of England. Walk through its dismal cells and corridors; explore only some of its seventy or eighty dungeons; send thy mind back and remember the hundreds of innocent men and women who have at times been the occupants of those places, and who have been unjustly charged and punished; and as you think of its having been the home of Chaucer, Bacon, Raleigh, Russell, and Sidney, and hundreds of others, you may well say with Mr. Hepworth Dixon, 'The saddest pages in our country's history are to be found scratched on the walls of the dungeons in the Tower of London.'

The principal object the eye rests upon as you stand upon Tower Hill is the old square tower built by the Conqueror; the turrets at the corners were formerly used as cells for the confinement of prisoners of the highest

rank. One can only mention a few of the other parts of this marvellous place, such as the Bell-tower, the Bloody-tower, the Flint-tower, the Devereaux-tower, the Lanthorn-tower, and last, but far from least, the Beauchamp-tower. Here let us enter for a few minutes. I have stood on many classic spots during my life,—on Mars Hill, where



RALEIGH'S CHAMBER.

Paul preached, on the Pnyx where Demosthenes orated, in the Mamertine prison where the Apostle languished, on the spot where Napoleon looked on a burning Moscow, and on the Alps where Hannibal crossed,—but nothing stirred my feelings (except it were Chillon) as the Beauchamp-tower. Saddest of all cells! most solemn of all prisons! It is almost covered with inscriptions. Think

of some few who were confined here: Lady Jane Grey and her husband, Guildford Dudley. Brave Lady Jane! entering the Tower as a Queen, a few days later a prisoner and no Queen; never guilty and never knowing fear, and in the most trying hour God-supported, thou wert a woman of whom we have a right to feel proud. Her husband was led under her window to execution on Tower Hill. As he passed she waved her hand, a last token of her constant love; a few moments later she saw his headless trunk carried by in a cart. The sight only inspired her with fresh courage. 'O Guildford! Guildford!' she exclaimed, as her eyes followed the beloved form, 'the ante-repast is not so bitter that thou hast tasted, and I shall soon taste, as to make me tremble; it is nothing compared to that feast of which we shall this day partake in Heaven.' In a few moments the headsman appeared for her, and thus she passed away, bequeathing a maxim to a friend who begged a memorial of her in the following words, 'LIVE TO DIE.'

Time and space hinder me from speaking of other illustrious persons who were imprisoned here, but before we leave this place look at one or two of the inscriptions. Here is the shortest, IANE, the supposed work of Lady Jane. Now look at another—

Thomas Miagh, which lieth here alone,
That faine would from hence be gone;

and yet one other—

1585. Thomas Baudewin. Juli.
As virtue maketh life, so sin causeth death.

Not far from here we see Traitors' Gate. Proudest of nobles, fairest of women, bravest of men, have passed into the Tower by this Water Gate, never to leave it, till led to the scaffold. Now let us leave this huge fortress, which has held as many as a thousand prisoners at one time, and coming out once again on to Tower Hill, recall to mind some of those whose heads have rolled from off their shoulders here,—the beautiful Anne Boleyn; the ambitious

Catherine Howard ; the noble Margaret, Countess of Salisbury.

The Tower has also been the prison of William Wallace, and Bruce, King of Scotland,—names of which Scotland may well be proud,—and the celebrated martyr, Anne Askew, who whilst here was put to the rack ; and time would fail me to tell of Cranmer, and Latimer, and Jeremy Taylor, of William Penn for preaching in the streets, and



TRAITORS' GATE.

hosts of others : I have but mentioned the names of a few who suffered in this historic prison.

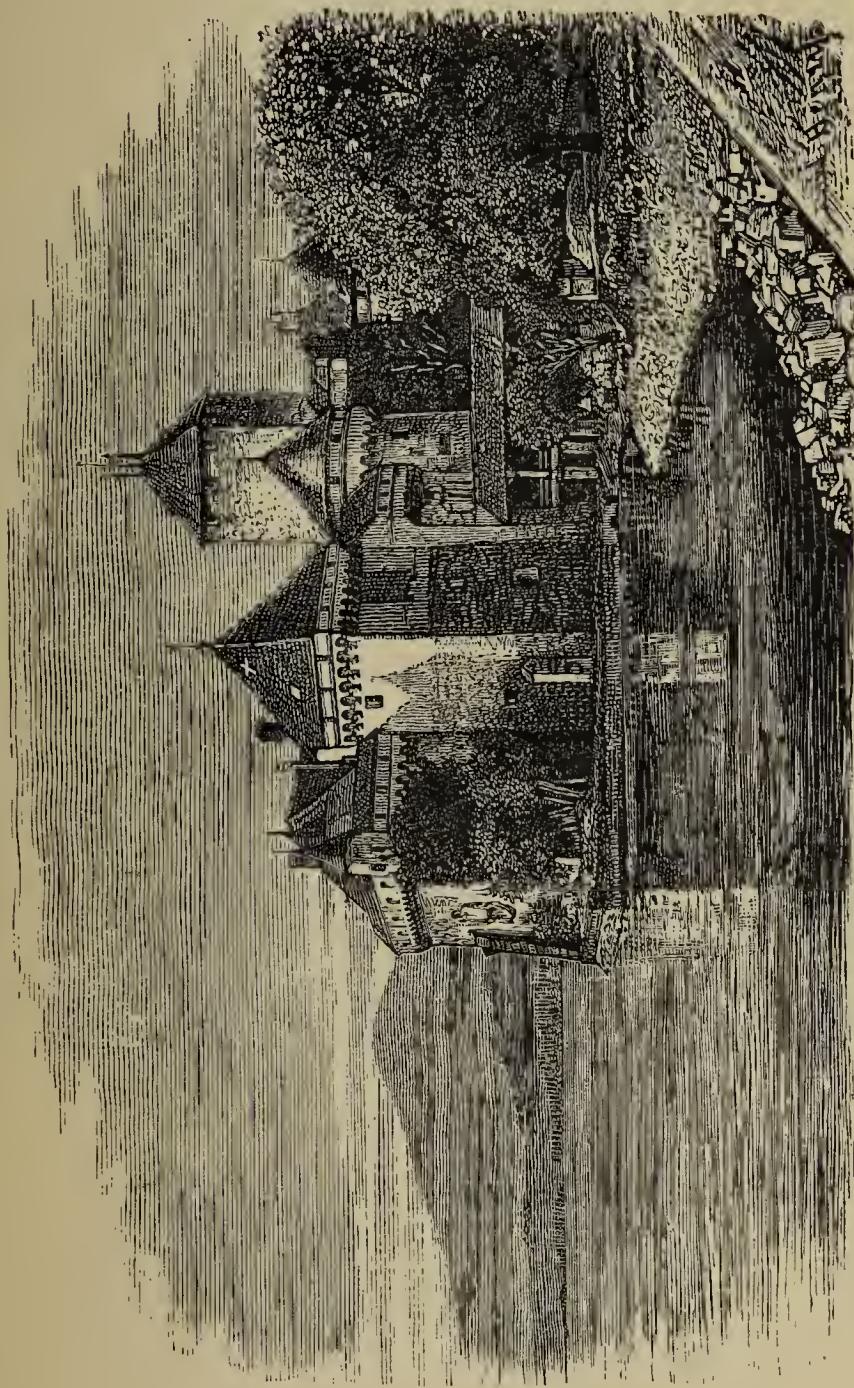
The Castle of St. Angelo, on the banks of the Tiber, has been for many years a prison : in it have been confined Beatrice Cenci Cellini and Cagliostro ; and, in more recent years, Napoleon III. As a building it dates from the time of the Emperor Hadrian, who erected it as a mausoleum for himself and family, and it was completed in A.D. 140. This was the last resting-place of the above family, and there may still be seen the niches where once stood the

urns which would have received their dust. The Castle is now used as a military prison.

The same day that I visited the Castle, I also went down into the Mamertine prison, where it is generally believed the Apostle Paul was confined,—a dark and gloomy place, but which was lit up by the presence of the Lord of Light and Glory: a prison truly, but a prison that speaks of the faith of one whose labours for his Master only ended with his death. I close this chapter with an account of a visit I made to the prison of Chillon on the Lake of Geneva.

The Castle of Chillon is a grand old place, noble and majestic, as viewed from the outside, and though built a thousand years ago, seems as strong and perfect as the day it was erected. The interior is equally magnificent and more impressive.

Bonnivard, the prisoner, was born in 1496 at Seyssel, was educated at Turin, and at the age of sixteen received from his uncle the rich Priory of St. Victor and the lands attached thereto. Being of liberal opinions, he became obnoxious to the Duke of Savoy, who in 1523 attacked Geneva; Bonnivard threw himself with all his power of mind and body into the work of freeing the Genevese from the Savoyard yoke, but he was seized by the Duke's emissaries and carried off to the Castle of Grolee, and confined for two years. No sooner was he released than he again made a strenuous effort to advance the principles of the Republic and the cause of liberty. Again, in 1530, he fell into the hands of the Duke of Savoy, and was secretly taken to the dungeons of Chillon, without a parting word to friends or relations, to wife or betrothed (it is not known for certain whether he was then married), who were ignorant of his whereabouts, or whether he was alive or not. Here he was confined for years in the deep dungeon hewn in the solid rock, chained to one of the massive pillars, and never once during those years of torture was he released from the chains which bound him there; dragging his clanking chains along, he could



EXTERIOR OF CHILLON CASTLE.

just walk two or three steps either way, and in so doing has worn the stony floor quite hollow in places.

The Castle is washed by the waters of the lake, and is built on a rock close to the shore, to which it is connected by a wooden bridge. Entering by an old gateway, I passed straight into the two dungeons. They are of equal length. I paced them, and found them both to be about a hundred



INTERIOR OF CHILLON.

and twenty-one feet long and thirty-four feet wide ; was shown the ring attached to one of the large pillars to which Bonnivard was chained those weary years, and the hollow places in the rocky ground worn by the poor prisoner's walking to and fro continually as far as his chains permitted ; but for the guide being with me, I could have wept for very sympathy. I was delighted with my visit ; it was worth going from England to see that alone. The dungeons were more like underground cathedrals, and

constructed, or rather hewn out, as though they were made to last for eternity ; not a stone seems lost or out of place. The exterior appears as though it were built but a few years ago, so new and perfect does it look, whilst the magnificent underground prisons would well serve their purpose now as they did then. The guide showed me also the torture chamber ; the beam where the criminals were hanged ; the smaller dungeon, between the two large ones, where the prisoners spent the night before they were executed ; the Oubliette—a trap-door with a few steps descending, to which the poor prisoner would be led by his gaoler, and told he was free, and might descend to liberty ; in semi-darkness, one—two—three steps were taken, and the man was precipitated upon sharp instruments, from which he would fall into the lake below. There is besides a grand old dining-hall seventy-five feet long, with open fireplaces of the most ancient style, a few tattered banners, and a number of old matchlocks or muskets on shelves surrounding the place.

The names of Byron, Victor Hugo, Dickens, and others, had been cut upon the pillars of the dungeon, but, to me, it seemed a desecration of the place. I was thinking of the sufferings and sorrows of Bonnivard.

CHILLON.*

CHILLON, thy prison walls have spoken
And I have felt for him who, thro'
Did linger on, in that most awful, yet
Illumined only by the 'dim and ghastly light'
Another speaks of, as tho' a sunbeam
After many years had lost its way,
And found an entrance in
With gladness and with sorrow joined
I pace thy prison house,
Full six score feet and more, from end to end.

To my spirit,
Those weary years,
Imposing place,
Thy gloomy but majestic vaults.

* Written on the diligence whilst travelling from Chamounix to Geneva, after visiting the Castle of Chillon.

But he was chained to pillar firm
 By cruel bands of iron,
 And could but drag his clanking chains,
 Of steps a few, this way and that,
 Till he had worn thy stony floor,
 In places here and there, quite hollow.

Poor Bonnivard ! my brother-man !
 My spirit hath had fellowship with thee.
 The mem'ry of thy sufferings and thy wrongs
 Hath struck a chord within,
 And tears unbidden from a heart surcharged
 Would fain o'erflow—and weep ;
 But I am mindful of the presence of another,
 The hireling who hath led me here,
 Who might mistake a sympathy divine within me
 For weakness of the man.

Poor Bonnivard !
 How thou didst suffer ! What were thy thoughts ?
 Of whom wert thinking ? Hadst thou no loved one
 Who, in years gone by, was called to share
 'Thy love, thy joys, thy sorrows, and thy care' ?

If so, I pity thee indeed,

For it would make thy prison two.
 Thy sufferings thou wouldest bear with manly courage,
 But thy poor mind upon the rack,
 Thy tortured brain would suffer more

Than limbs to pillar bound ;
 As thinking oft of her, wouldest wonder,
 'Is't well with her ? (as far as she's concerned).
Where is she ? What are her thoughts ?
 Wondering, perhaps, if I am living still,
 Or numbered with the dead.'
 Such thoughts as these, and thousands more,
 Would crowd that busy brain, that naught else
 Had to do but think ; and thinking oft,
 And oft again, till in that mind

Did chaos almost reign.
 Still thoughts of how she'd think, and feel for him,
 And suffer for his sake,
 And his own thoughts of her,

Would mingle so,
 That reason well might tremble on her throne,
 Till kindly sleep would cast her mantle o'er him,
 And he would rest ; yet sleeping, chance to dream ;
 Till wakened, perhaps, by jailor rude,
 And brought into another day's

Uncertainty and sorrow.
 Poor Bonnivard ! Ages have hurried by since then,
 But thou art not forgotten.
 What tho' full many a year has passed adown
 The gulf of Time, and moons have waxed and waned,

Casting their pallid light upon the stream,
My sympathy the chasm leaps,
And, standing with thee on the other side,
Our spirits blend in one.

Standing out on the beautiful blue waters of the Mediterranean, some few miles from the south coast of France, is the Isle of St. Marguerite. I had walked from the farther side of the island to that point nearest the mainland where is to be seen the Castle and Prison of the Man with the Iron Mask, who was herein confined for fourteen years. It is a good-sized, but somewhat gloomy dungeon, having three distinct gratings built into the window, the walls being three feet thick. Many have been the conjectures as to who this mysterious being really was, but he was generally supposed to have been the twin-brother of Louis Quatorze. The strange part of his punishment was he always wore an iron mask ; hence the name which history has given him. He succeeded in getting a silver dish—on which he had scratched his name—out of the window, which, falling to the foot of the rock by the seashore, fell into the hands of a peasant who could not read, and who gave it to the governor of the Castle.

After languishing here for many years, he was transferred to the Bastille, where he died after ten more long weary years of solitary confinement.

This particular prison has another story to tell of more recent date ; for here it was where Marshal Bazaine was immured, and from whence he escaped, by the aid, rumour said, of some fair English ladies, whilst others admit it was connived at by the authorities. A perilous escape it must have been, for he descended the steep cliff on which the prison is built by a rope to the shore, where friends were waiting for him with a boat.

A large number of Moors from Oran (French prisoners of war) were located on the island when I visited it, who seemed to have plenty of liberty to wander about the place. One handsome fellow was nursing a baby which belonged to the wife of one of the soldiers, nor would he part with it, exclaiming, 'Toujours mon camarade.'

CHAPTER II.

PRISON STORIES.

‘**H**OW old are you, Victor?’
‘I am twenty-seven.’

The gentleman who asked the question was the governor of one of her Majesty's convict prisons, who was conducting me round the establishment, and the man who answered was a convict under sentence of twenty years' penal servitude.

‘Have you heard from your mother lately?’

‘Yes, I had a letter from her a week or two ago.’

The mentioning the word ‘mother’ almost unmanned him, and I turned from him to the governor and inquired into the circumstances. He was a Swede who in a drunken row on the high seas had struck a fellow-seaman with a knife. Sequel: twenty years' imprisonment, and separation from a loving mother for that time, to say nothing of her sorrow. O drink! how much have we to lay at thy door!

PORTSMOUTH.

Passing through the carpenters' shop, I noticed an intelligent-looking man at work; and seeing by his arm he was a ‘lifer’—by the letter ‘L’ being there in place of a figure or a number—I inquired the cause, and was told, ‘Manslaughter’; and within a quarter of an hour I had spoken to two other convicts whose cases were almost identical. One of them said, ‘I woke up one morning in a police cell, and when the constable brought me some

breakfast I asked him what I was there for, and he answered, 'Murder.' I thought he was joking, and asked him to tell me what I was locked up for, and he said, 'Last night you were brought in drunk and charged with the murder of a fellow-workman.' It was too true. I was tried and sentenced to death, but it was commuted to a life sentence; but, sir, I have no more recollection of having killed a man than you have.' The three cases cited above were so alike that in telling one I have explained the three.

INFIDELITY.

'I should never have been here but for the teaching of infidelity.' So spake a young convict whilst in Pentonville, and many have borne a similar testimony. Ah! my friend, would that you were the only one who thus regretted being led away by such false teaching, which only leads to open sin or vice. Many, very many, who languish in 'durance vile,' attribute their downward career to listening to such as deny the God of Revelation; they became lawless in proportion as they threw off the fear of God, and now bitterly repent having imbibed infidel doctrines. Listen to the testimony of one as recorded in *The British Workman* :—

'I am one of thirteen infidels: what has become of my friends? I will tell you. One became a Christian, six were sentenced to long terms of penal servitude, four were hanged, one is in the cell above, a prisoner for life, and *I am to be hanged to-morrow!*'

We charge infidelity with being the cause of largely augmenting the number of the 'dangerous classes,' and when anarchy shall have spread itself still more widely o'er our much-loved land, it will be seen that it drew the greater number of its recruits from men who have tried to persuade themselves there was no God, no judgment, and no future punishment. We bless the Author of our common Christianity for making His people the 'salt of the earth' and the 'lights of the world.'

H.M. PRISON, NEWGATE.

‘Twenty years’ penal servitude.’ He left the dock of the Old Bailey, and was led through the corridor into Newgate; and, speaking of it in after years, he said, ‘There on my cell wall was the card: it bore my name and my sentence—“twenty years.” No wife to cheer, no children to prattle at my knee. “Twenty years!” O God! will it ever end? “Twenty years!”—two hundred and forty months,—one thousand and forty weeks; oh, this dread future! My brain reeled, reason tottered on her throne, and I had well-nigh become insane.’

Reader! if the thought of the long sentence nearly drove this poor prisoner mad, what would be our feelings and our thoughts if we were banished from God’s loving presence *for ever?*

‘My husband is to be tried this morning: will you go and speak a word for him?’

I hastened to the Old Bailey, saddened at heart to think that an old companion of my own was to be tried; one well brought up and with good prospects in life—yet here he stood at the Old Bailey. Before I reached the court he was sentenced to ‘five years,’ which I thought was very severe for his crime, and specially as it was a first offence.

Poor Harry! he seemed, as I wished him good-bye after visiting him in Newgate, as though he could hardly believe it. His fast life and drink had greatly injured his health, and I wondered if ever he would live to come out again: another proof of the curse of strong drink. I could only implore him to let this awful trial bring him to Christ, and left him after bidding him seek God in his terrible trouble.

H.M. CONVICT PRISON, CHATHAM.

A batch of convicts has just arrived from London, where they have just finished their nine months of solitary

confinement, and are now about to enter upon some years of servitude on the Public Works.

'What are you?' asked one of the officials, addressing the first prisoner.

'A carpenter.'

'All right, you will be put in the carpenters' shop.'

'And you?'

'A stonemason, sir.'

'Very well; officer, take him over to the stone-cutters yard.'

'And what are you two?'

One replied, 'I am a lawyer by profession, and do not know any trade.' The other answered, 'I have been manager of a City firm, and have never done any manual labour in my life.'

'Well, we must make navvies of you; you'll soon pick it up.'

This appears rather hard on the lawyer and the manager, and it is a great question whether this method does not stand in need of alteration. Let us see how it worked in this instance.

Three years passed away, the manager doing the work of a navvy; but at the end of that time he weighed seventy-two pounds less, and had been in the infirmary seventy-four days, and felt sure he would never live to complete his sentence of 'five years' penal servitude.'

Having seen the prisons of very many countries in Europe, Africa, and America, I am glad to be able to say there are few prisons which are better managed than our own, but I must say there are some grave defects in our own system, and I think this is one. The relations of the poor man above, on visiting him, were alarmed and distressed at his appearance, and, hearing that I was interested in prison matters, sought my help and sympathy. Finding he had never once been reported, that he bore the best of characters, and that, better still, God in His mercy had led him to deep repentance, and that he was evidently a changed man, I wrote to the Secretary of

State on his behalf, promising to look after the man, and praying him to extend mercy to this prisoner. My letter was also endorsed by a high dignitary of the City of London. A few days brought me an answer from the Home Secretary, telling me the case should be 'carefully seen into.' A week or two later the following reached me:—

11th April, 1885.

MR. CHARLES COOK,—

DEAR SIR,—It is with deep emotion of gratitude and thankfulness that I pen these few lines to humbly thank you for your exceeding great goodness and mercy to me and my dear wife and children, in having so graciously interested yourself upon my behalf, which I shall ever remember with thankfulness. I was liberated very late Tuesday evening (7th), and you will quite understand my not writing to you before this. I can scarcely believe yet that I am once again a free man. I assure you that I shall ever endeavour to redeem the past by the help of God, who, in His infinite mercy, sent me from the world, and now has restored me to my home and friends.

If you would allow me to come and have an interview with you, I should be very pleased. I can then open my heart to you, and your advice and counsel will be very dear to me.

Am very happy to say that since my liberation I have and am still receiving so much kindness from friends, and also that my health is wonderfully improved. Hoping that you will shortly allow me an interview, and humbly asking that you will remember me and mine in prayer,

Allow me to remain,

Your most obedient servant,

G—— H——.

I have recently returned from visiting one of her Majesty's convict establishments, and, having been shown round the place by one of the highest officials, was glad to hear from his lips of the results of his quiet testimony and life among the inmates.

A convict, while cleaning windows in the apartments of an official, noticed the text over the bed, 'He is our peace,' and thought to himself, 'Why should He not be my peace?' and, in the quiet of his lonely cell, sought the Saviour in His Word, and proved the reality of his conversion to God by his after-life.

'Had you been here,' said my friend who was conduct-

ing me round, 'a few days ago, I could have shown you a man who has just served twenty years' penal servitude, who left this prison without a single mark against his character, and who, I have no doubt, has found the Saviour and learned to love Him since he was first imprisoned. A more consistent Christian I have seldom seen.'

It is remarkable how the temperaments of some of the prisoners are evidenced, and how softening, if not refining, are the influences of what we should call little things, which are, however, of great moment to men who live where talking is strictly forbidden, and companionship is practically unknown.

Let us stand in this corner of the exercising yard at the usual hour when the men take their daily walk. 'Party' after 'party' make their appearance, amidst the chattering of a score or two of sparrows, who sit upon the wall as though they were quite expecting their dinner; and sure enough they do, for no sooner have the fourth 'party' of men marched into the yard than all the sparrows have swooped down into the centre of the convicts who are walking round, and are busily engaged pecking up the handfuls of crumbs which have been thrown to them; the prisoners apparently as much pleased as the birds. The last lot of men were the cooks from the kitchen, but how the sparrows distinguish them is a mystery. This daily sight is humanising to the men, though it is contrary to red tape.

Look! what has this man up his sleeve? He has no right to have anything there; but, as he will not be 'rubbed down' (searched) before he goes to his cell, he has brought a friend out for an airing. When his dinner consisting of a pint of good soup, eight ounces of bread, and one pound of potatoes, has been brought in and the door closed, Mr. Mouse walks down his arm, sits upon the table, and prepares to see the meal fairly shared. Man and mouse have been friends for many months, and there would be sorrow of heart if they were to part company. Even when the morning of discharge comes,

a special plea is, 'Please, sir, may I be allowed to take my mouse out?' The answer has sometimes been, 'Oh! I see, you purpose to lessen the number of inmates of the prison; *you*, of course, are at liberty to go, *but*—' the face of the prisoner changes, but a smile breaks over the countenance of the governor, and with a sound word of advice, and a loving invitation to the Saviour, convict and mouse pass into the outer world.

The most striking testimony to the power of the Gospel I have ever heard came from this particular prison. About twelve years ago a man received a 'life sentence'; and his own testimony, some six years after, was, 'As the door of my cell closed behind me, my whole life rose before me. Sinking on my knees, I rested on the mercy of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and, though I have no hope in this world, I have never had a dark hour since.' My friend's testimony concerning him is, 'We have had no report against him since he has been here, and from my daily knowledge of him, I can say he is a quiet, contented, bright, and happy follower of Christ.'

Getting into a railway carriage near a certain town in England, we observed a young fellow attentively reading his Bible. His hair, being suspiciously short, marked him as a gaol-bird 'growing his feathers.' Venturing to ask why he took such an interest in the Word of God, he volunteered the following story:—

'In a moment of temptation I fell, was tried, and sentenced to a term of penal servitude. There was in the prison a young assistant-chaplain, whose duties took him past the cell where I was at work. His look of sympathy always cheered me; and, though his duties did not allow him to visit the prisoners in that part of the gaol, I often saw him looking kindly at me. Once I saw a tear on his cheek. I felt I could die for that man, and, as I wondered what I could do to please him, the thought struck me that he would be pleased to see me reading my Bible. The next morning, when he passed by my half-open cell door, he looked in, saw me reading, and

smiled. I continued to read regularly, discovered my condition as a lost sinner, trembled, on further study found the Saviour, and then rejoiced. I have never spoken to that young clergyman, nor does he know of my change of heart, but I owe my conversion to the tear on his cheek, which led me to search the Scriptures. I was discharged from prison this morning, and am now going home to my dear old mother in the village of N——.' We draw a veil over that meeting and the happiness of parent and child, although we did not leave him till we saw him enfolded in those arms of love, and then went on our way thinking of the verse,—

Ill that God blesses turns to good,
And unblessed good to ill ;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will.

The following part of a letter, recently received, will speak for itself:—

WINCHESTER GAOL.

DEAR SIR,—I have been sentenced to twelve months' hard labour, and was sent here from London. I believe God has permitted this to bring me to Himself. My prayer is that He will show me myself. Every time I take up the Word of God it seems to make me more miserable; when I get on my knees in my cell I am still more wretched, and can only cry out, 'O God! show me myself.' Oh! if I had only taken your advice and given the Saviour my heart on the night when you pleaded with me, this would never have happened. Please pray for me. You say in your letter that you will come down and see me, but it would cost much money to come here. Do not think I do not wish to see you; but the winter is now on; the poor you come in contact with will need help; and the money you would spend in coming here, please let me ask you to use it for them, and you may be able thus to do some mother's child good. When you speak to the people next Sunday, do tell them to take warning from me. The first time I saw you was at the races; a young man friend had taken me, and you were giving away some books; as we passed you gave my friend a small yellow-covered book: through that book he is now in heaven; and, alas! I am here. The book was the means of his conversion. One favour only I ask of you—Will you meet me at Paddington Station on the morning of my discharge, July 20th, 1891?

Yours truly,
MARY B——.

CHAPTER III.

A ROMANTIC PRISON STORY.

MANY have been my experiences, and strange adventures have I known since I first began visiting prisons ; but the following hitherto unpublished story was one of the strangest I was ever mixed up in ; and, it may be, the last chapter is not yet written.

‘ Is Mr. Charles Cook at home ? ’

‘ No, he is at Yarmouth ; you will no doubt find him speaking on the sands.’

The lady who had asked the question at our house in London was an elderly person,—perhaps something over fifty-six,—and within six hours she had found out the apartments we were occupying at the above-named sea-side place, and very soon had unburdened her soul, telling us why she had travelled over five hundred miles from S—— to London, and then on into the Eastern Counties. As far as memory serves me, I will let her tell her own tale.

‘ I am interested in a young man who is in a French convict prison, and as I am aware you have visited many of the prisons of that country, I think you may be able to help me in getting him released ; for I am indebted to him for kindness done to one who is dear to me, and as I feel he does not deserve the sentence he has received, your influence may be of use to him. He was arrested at an hotel in Paris while in company with a lady, and charged with the unlawful possession of property belonging to a certain lady of title ; and as a number of Englishmen

had lately been arrested who belonged to what was called the "Long Firm," the judges who tried him, thinking he was in league with *them*, sentenced him to "three years in a convict prison." She assured me he was not guilty, 'the lady might possibly be to blame for having the property *with her*, but he was quite unaware that it belonged to any one save the friend he was with at the hotel.'

It did seem to me rather a hard sentence, and as the friend who pleaded with me to interfere for the prisoner gave me to understand she was engaged in Mission work in the far north, and was known to all the well-known workers in the Master's service, I promised her I would write to the French Government, and see what could be done on behalf of the unfortunate young man. True to my promise, I at once wrote to the authorities, and in a few days received permission to write to or to visit the prisoner in the French prison at Loos, near Lille.

I found he had served about half his sentence, bore a most excellent character, was in high favour with the governor, and had, like Joseph, been put in authority over other prisoners. At my first introduction I found him studying his Greek Testament, which certainly made me think well of him (an opinion I have never yet had any occasion to change my mind about); and from the many conversations I had with him, I could come to no other conclusion than that his long seclusion from the world had had the effect of leading him to find the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. I cannot tell with what pleasure he translated some of my addresses, which I had given him to read, into French, and with what joy he seemed to listen to the expounding of the Word of God.

I ought perhaps to say here, that there were several important English prisoners confined in the same place, who had been concerned in some very big diamond robberies in Paris,—men whom my friend, if I may thus speak of him, B—— was daily brought into contact with, and with whom he had yet to do some special business.

Some few weeks passed away, and my elderly friend telegraphed me to 'at once go to the prison at Loos and see the young man, as he was in danger.' I was too busy to leave England, and not able to get away; but a second telegram followed on the next day, and on the Saturday a third from France, 'Go at once.'

So, thinking I might get back in time for my Sunday services, I caught the mail train for Dover, crossed the Channel in such a storm that would have left many friends quite prostrate, went on to Lille, then to Loos, saw the prisoner, had some time with him, had a long conversation with the governor of the gaol, back to Lille, on to Calais, another terrible crossing, and arrived at Charing Cross and breakfasted at the hotel,—having been away from London less than twenty-four hours,—preached three times on the Lord's day, and went home to bed and slept the 'sleep of the just.'

A few more weeks passed away, and had the reader of this been at the railway station at Lille, he might have noticed two well-dressed gentlemen closely observing all the arrivals from Calais; presently two unmistakable Englishmen descended from the train, hailed a cab, and drove off to an hotel, followed closely in another carriage by the friends mentioned above. The first two engaged a bedroom between them; the others did the same, taking particular care to see that it was next door to the one placed at the disposal of the Englishmen.

Early the next morning the two detectives were up, but the birds had flown; they had left the hotel five minutes before and driven rapidly away in a carriage; and here we leave them, as we seek to describe another chapter in the strange story.

Every morning it was customary for a pair-horse waggon to drive into the prison yard at Loos, and take away two very large hampers full of boots which had been made by the convicts, and which were despatched from the gaol to a neighbouring tradesman by contract daily. Punctually at ten o'clock one bright morning the vehicle

left the prison as usual, and when about half a mile from its starting place it was abruptly stopped by two men who appeared to be labourers ; just then the two detectives previously named also appeared, and, getting into the van, cut the strings of the hampers which should have been filled with boots, but which contained two live prisoners who had so far escaped from 'durance vile.' They were immediately handcuffed by the two persons who appeared to be simply labourers ; and when these men had accomplished that feat, they put the two detectives in the very baskets from which the escaped prisoners had been taken, tied the hampers down again, and bade the astonished coachman drive on ; they, in the meantime, escorting the two who had so recently contrived to thus cleverly make their escape back to the safe custody of the cells of the gaol at Loos.

Now let us follow the fortunes of the van, its baskets, and their contents. Between Loos and Lille there is a lonely avenue, and when the waggon had fully entered this somewhat dark lane, where the trees almost meet overhead, the driver was again startled by seeing two more men jump through the hedge, and whilst one stopped the horses, the other jumped into the van, and, cutting the strings of the hampers, cried, 'You are saved ! you are saved !'

'Not quite,' replied the French detectives, as they stepped out, 'and although we lost you this morning, we quite knew where we could find you ; please accompany us back to the convict prison, and there perhaps you may see your fellow-Englishmen whom you hoped to find in the baskets.'

Now we will go back, and getting behind the scenes, we shall see that the Englishmen who had been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment had by some means managed to correspond with their friends in England, and had told them they were planning an escape and would soon be out ; but the promotion of our friend B——, their fellow-prisoner, to the important post of gate-keeper, seemed

to baulk their plans. They first tried to bribe him, then threatened his life, told him 'some of the warders were in their pay, and they were determined to escape if they had to murder him.' It was at this time that I hastened from England to see him, and then learned something of what was going on. One morning they approached him, and at once offered him £800 if he would pass the baskets out without, as usual, examining them. He told them he would give them an answer the following morning. In the meantime he saw the governor of the prison, told him of the danger he was in, and that he feared every day that some plot would be laid for him, and asked him for his advice. The governor said, 'Take all the money they will give you, and agree to do your part in letting them out—and you shall do it.' The next day they actually gave him a substantial amount as part payment of the £800, which he duly handed over to the authorities. My readers will easily understand the rest; the governor had communicated with the detective force—hence the dramatic scenes outside. For the safety of B—— the governor now sent him to Lille prison, where he remained some time.

The lady now suggested it would be a good opportunity to write to Paris and ask for the release of B——, as he had been of so much use in the prison. I confess I more than once wondered why so very much interest was taken in the young prisoner by my friend; but she said, 'If I could promise to interest myself in him, and find him some employment in England, the French Government would set him at liberty'; and when she spoke of 'adopting him as her son,' I blamed myself for thoughts which had crossed my mind, and had even forgotten that I had been asked some time previously if I 'would take a *little note* into the gaol.' I, of course, refused; the French Government had trusted me, and given me exceptional facilities in allowing me to write to or see the prisoner when I liked, and I would, under no consideration, betray their confidence. However, a very little time elapsed

before Miss C—— and Mr. B—— entered Hyde Park Hall, and took their seats at one of our week-night meetings.

Yes ! he was released a day or two previously ; and certainly he seemed very thankful for the part I had played in helping him to be once more a free man. I had written to Paris, and suggested that if the authorities 'would discharge him, I felt sure he would fall into good hands, who would make it their business to watch over him ; at the same time provide him with work.' The Minister of the Interior had granted my desire, and had sent word to the governor of the Maison Centrale at Loos ; the result being as described above.

Miss C—— said that friends of hers would find a situation for him, and I soon heard he was doing very well as a shipping clerk, his linguistic abilities making him very useful. I heard occasionally from him, and quite looked upon him as a changed person, and wrote to him as a converted man.

Now comes the strange part of my story. Possibly six months passed away without hearing from either of them ; *then* I may say I heard of *both* of them,—a small piece of pasteboard, elegantly printed in silver, announcing the wedding of, etc., etc. ! I wondered if I had innocently been used as the means of getting a lover out of prison by Miss C——, or whether the motherly feeling of the good old soul had changed into the warmer affection when she saw how comely a young man he appeared when not in the plumage of a gaol-bird. I don't know to this day, but my judgment seemed to lead me to the latter conclusion ; but this I did feel, the marriage was a mistake. I, of course, thought I should now hear no more, and that, like the story-books we were wont to read usually ended, 'they lived happy ever afterwards' ; but *my* story is not quite done.

The honeymoon, and a few other moons, having passed away, I was startled by a letter from the lady : 'Could Mr. Cook tell her if Mr. B—— had ever been in any other prison ? or in any English prison ?' This was indeed

a surprise ; why ask me such a question ? My answer was very guarded : 'All that I know of the person mentioned I know through you ; you must know far more of him than I do.'

Then, a week later, a telegram from B—— : 'Meet me at Euston Hotel 10 P.M.' I went, and heard his side : 'They had parted, could not possibly agree ; he was doing well in a large firm ; had a good position, feared he would lose it through her !'

I could hardly dare to offer advice. I had some idea that I had not been fully trusted with all Miss C—— knew, and yet my faith in the young fellow remains unshaken to this day ; but since wishing him 'Good night' at Euston, I have never seen nor heard of him ; nor do I know where his wife is ;—and here my prison story must abruptly close, though it may be 'to be concluded' later on.



CHAPTER IV.

THE LANGUAGE AND POETRY OF THIEVES.

AT the late Paris Exhibition a Chinese exhibitor was asked, 'Do you speak English ?'

'No ; I do speak American,' was the reply ; and no doubt there are many words used in America which Englishmen who have not travelled in that country would be at a loss to understand. So, in this land, those altogether unacquainted with the annals of crime could not possibly understand very much of the language of thieves ; for instance, one who had been caught, tried, and sentenced to penal servitude was relating the account to a friend in prison, and this was his story : 'I was jogging down a blooming slum in the chapel when I butted a reeler who was sporting a red slang. I broke off his jerry, and boned the clock, which was a red one, but I was spotted by a copper, who claimed me. I was lugged before the beak, who gave me six doss in the steel. The week after I was chucked up, I did a snatch near St. Paul's ; was collared, lagged, and got this bit of seven stretch.' The reader will be able to translate the above by the aid of what follows. I here append a few words of thieves' slang, with their meanings translated :—

a dead 'un . . .	an empty house.	a peter	a cash-box.
wedge	silver plate.	clobber	clothes.
a century of quids	a hundred pounds.	split out	separate.
a half-James . . .	half-sovereign.	slugging a copper	assaulting a po-liceman.
front me	cover me.	monicker	name.
balmy	mad.	doing a burst . . .	committing a bur-glary.
wringing yourself	changing clothes.		
spark-prop . . .	diamond pin.		

a Russia . . .	a pocket-book.	the beak . . .	magistrate.
bracelets . . .	handcuffs.	a drag, or 13	
flimsies or stiff .	notes.	clean shirts . .	three months.
half a century in pap . . .	£50 in notes.	seven stretch . .	seven years.
a double finn . .	a £10 note.	six moon . . .	six months.
the ramp . . .	hall-mark.	tricky or wide .	clever.
guy . . .	run away.	to cut up . . .	to share out.
dukes . . .	hands.	pudding . . .	prepared liver to silence dogs.
a poge . . .	a purse.	shise . . .	bad money.
screws . . .	skeleton keys.	slangs . . .	prison chains.
fullied . . .	committed for trial.	greasing his dukes	bribing some one.
rubbled down . .	searched.	a chive . . .	a knife.
a madam . . .	a handkerchief.	a fence . . .	receiver of stolen goods.
the rattler . . .	the train.	a neddie . . .	life preserver.
a hark . . .	a spy.	a break or lead .	a collection.
pieces . . .	money.	a tombstone . .	a pawn-ticket.
a jolly . . .	a pretence.	a deaner . . .	a shilling.
faiking . . .	malingering.	a scuff . . .	a crowd.
cocks . . .	convicts from London.	a kip . . .	a bed.
chucking a dum- my . . .	counterfeiting a fit.	smuggling snowy .	stealing linen.
hooks . . .	pickpockets.	a push . . .	a convict gang.
a red jerry . .	a gold chain.	a lagging . . .	a sentence.
a kosh . . .	a bludgeon.	usher . . .	yes.
turned over . .	cell searched.	canon . . .	drunk.
kipsy . . .	basket.	spurred . . .	annoyed.
hot beef . . .	stop thief.	smugged or coppt	apprehended.
the stone jug . .	Newgate.	ducat or brief .	ticket.
the bank . . .	Millbank.	wheel of life . .	treadmill.
the steel . . .	House of Correc- tion.	dancers . . .	steps.
a red 'un . . .	a gold watch.	dying in a horse's nightcap . . .	being hanged.
a mouthpiece . .	counsel.	a bashing . . .	a flogging.
		through the black- sniith . . .	for forgery.

During the last twenty years I have been thrown into the company of criminals of all sorts and conditions, and having visited all our English convict prisons, besides all our London gaols, my ears seem quite familiar with the above language, which to many readers will seem quaint and strange. The above is only a specimen, and I have no doubt there is much more that an outsider would never know, but this is quite sufficient to prove that there is such a thing as the language of thieves.

In the course of my wanderings about the world I have

noticed that 'John Bull,' quite as much as 'Brother Jonathan,' has a passion for inscribing his name in any spot to which he may travel. The Colosseum in Rome, the Pyramids, the Temple at Karnak, the Alhambra at Granada, the Central Park New York, and the Leaning Tower of Pisa, all bear testimony alike that some immortal Somebody has visited these places, and taken particular care to leave his full name and address. While wandering through the Palace of the Cæsars, Rome, some years ago, I saw chiselled on one of the walls something like this: 'Mr. and Mrs. Davis, of Montagu Villas, C—, London, visited this place August 30th, 188—.' On repassing the place a little later, I found some one had added on to it, 'AND WERE TAKEN UP FOR FORGERY SHORTLY AFTERWARDS,' to which the reader may like to add, 'Serve 'em right.'

But one would hardly suppose that a prison would be the place where men would care to leave their names; and yet in every gaol I have visited, at home and abroad, I find, as in the 'outside world,' men delight to scribble their names, and in prison put even their sentence, some even adding a word of warning, others letting us know for what they have been 'put away.'

The variety of these inscriptions is wonderful; they range 'from grave to gay,' and descend 'from the sublime to the ridiculous,' and can be seen alike in the Beauchamp-tower and the convict cell. While reading some you can but laugh; over others your sympathies may cause a tear.

Michael Davitt tells us, in his 'Leaves from a Prison Diary,' that he wrote upon the low, sloping roof of the Old Bailey waiting-room, 'M. D. expects ten years for the crime of being an Irish Nationalist and the victim of an informer's perjury.' On the boundary pillar which divides Europe from Asia and Russia from Siberia, amid the many inscriptions, is one partly obliterated, and all that can be seen is 'YE MARIE.' As far as this pillar friends and relations of the prisoners might travel with them, but

no farther, and some one has evidently said, 'Good-bye, Marie.' Who Marie was, or who the writer was, who shall say? But who can gauge the depths of sorrow the inscription tells of? I gather a few of different sorts from our various English prisons. In a library book, on the edge of the letterpress, one had written:—

Good-bye, Lucy dear;
I'm parted from you for seven long year.

ALFRED JONES.

The book had plainly been in the hands of another prisoner, who evidently was not of so sentimental a turn of mind, for right underneath this effusion of the love-sick poet Jones was written,—

If Lucy dear is like most gals,
She'll give few sighs or moans,
But soon will find among your pals
Another Alfred Jones.

I can but add, I am at a loss to know how these prisoners procured the pencil with which they wrote the above.

The Rev. J. W. Horsley, late Chaplain of H.M. Prison Clerkenwell, in 'Jottings from Jail,' tells of several instances, which I here transcribe. On the cell wall of a female prisoner was written:—

I wish to God my babe was born,
And smiling on its father's knee,
And I, poor girl, lay in my grave,
The green grass growing over me.

The oppressiveness of time, which is the real punishment of prison life to most, finds a striking record in such words as these: '21,000 times have I walked round this cell in a week; 3330 bricks in this cell.'

For seven long years I've served them,
And seven long years I've to stay,
For meeting a bloke in our alley,
And taking his ticker away.

Cheer up, boys, down with sorrow;
Beef to-day, and soup to-morrow.

O who can tell the pains I feel,
 A poor and harmless sailor ;
 I miss my grog at every meal ;
 Here comes the blooming jailor.

‘Neddie, from City Road, smugged for attempt up the Grove, expects a sixer.’

But it is not only on the walls of the cells, but on the tin pannikins in which the dinners, etc., are served out to the convicts, that you may find such literary efforts as the following :—

Millbank for thick shins and graft at the pump ;
 Broadmoor for all laggs as go off their chump ;
 Brixton for good toke and cocoa, with fat ;
 Dartmoor for bad grub, but plenty of chat ;
 Portsmouth a blooming bad place for hard work ;
 Chatham on Sunday gives four ounce of pork ;
 Portland is worst of the lot for to joke in—
 For fetching a lagging there is no place like Woking.

CRUTCHY QUINN, 10 and a ticket.

Crutchy had evidently been the rounds of our penal establishments ; for I know from my visits to the above places that there is some truth in what he says, and of the last-mentioned place, better known as ‘The Thieves’ Palace,’ where only the imbecile and semi-idiot were supposed to reside, I have seen armchairs, aviaries, oil paintings, and couches, with many other articles of luxury unknown to convicts generally ; and many were the attempts ‘to fetch Woking’ by ‘putting on the balmy stick.’ The male prison at Woking is now done away with, all lunatics being sent to Broadmoor. Let me close this chapter by here giving the testimony of a convict who was ‘doing a second lagging’ at Portland, and who left the following effusion on his slate, where it was found by the governor :—

I cannot take my walks abroad,
 I’m under lock and key ;
 And much the public I applaud
 For their kind care of me.

Not more than others I deserve,
In fact, much less than more ;
Yet I have bread whilst others starve,
And beg from door to door.

The honest pauper in the street,
Half naked, I behold ;
Whilst I am clad from head to foot,
And covered from the cold.

Thousands there are who scarce can tell
Where they may lay their head ;
But I've a warm and well-aired cell,
A bath, good books, good bed.

While they are fed on workhouse fare,
And grudged their scanty food,
Three times a day my meals I get,
Sufficient, wholesome, good.

Then to the British public health,
Who all our care relieves ;
And while they treat us as they do,
They'll never want for thieves.

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CHAPTER V.

PENAL SERVITUDE.

THE public has heard during the last few years something about Her Majesty's prisons from those who unfortunately have suffered the punishment of penal servitude ; but it is a question whether an 'Ex-Convict,' or even 'One Who Endured It,' was an impartial observer of what he saw of these institutions of our country, and I very much doubt whether they make reliable writers when they 'rush into print' to air their grievances, and tell us of the sufferings they passed through. Some of these writers I boldly accuse of gross exaggeration when they speak of the bread and the food generally as being unfit to eat. One says : 'Without exception, the food as supplied to convicts in Her Majesty's Convict Prison, Pentonville, is of the most inferior and disgustingly dirty description—in short, beyond description.' How false this statement is will be seen when Pentonville Prison (which I have inspected more than once) is described. Again, another writer says of this prison : 'A few of the men on my landing picked oakum, but if they were fortunate enough to be able to square the warders, it was of no consequence whether they picked one pound or one ounce. For a consideration I was given a few hanks of coils to roll up into balls for the mat-makers, and when I had not an interesting book or a *newspaper*, I used to while away the time by making a ball. I admit that I suffered a good deal mentally, on account of the degradation to which I had reduced myself ;

but, apart from that, and to a man not afflicted with a conscience, the first nine months of a sentence of penal servitude may be passed in ease, and almost in comfort, at Pentonville.'

Now, I will not say that every warder is immaculate, and that no warder can be bribed; but when this writer speaks of warders, and asks us to believe that it was customary for him to have his newspaper in his cell, he cannot expect intelligent persons to believe him.

In this very prison, I knew personally several of the principal warders, and knew them to be most conscientious, God-fearing men, and am certain it would be an impossibility for any prisoner to thus procure newspapers.

I feel it only right to say here, that I do not wish to cause any reflection on the writer of 'Five Years' Penal Servitude.' I believe, on the whole, what he has said has been written in a truthful and honest spirit, and stands out in bright contrast to the rubbish often written about our prisoners being ill-fed, badly clothed, and inhumanly treated.

But if, on the one hand, we are hardly inclined to believe what a convict would tell us of the working of our prison system, the British public are also chary of believing statements made by officials receiving pay from the Government, and whose duty almost would oblige them to speak well of these institutions.

I am aware that visitors are appointed to act the part of independent visiting committees of convict prisons, wholly distinct from the officials, and it is said, 'These gentlemen discharge their duties admirably in keeping the Government informed of any defects in prison management'; but I am not aware of any of these gentlemen ever having given the *public* the benefit of their experience.

That this is an important matter—viz., the treatment of our prisoners and the working of the Penal Servitude Acts—may be gathered from the fact that a Premier once said, 'This is a subject which demands the utmost

possible public discussion,' whilst the Secretary of State, writing in June, 1882, to the Secretary of the Howard Association, said, 'There may be faults in the conduct of prisons, which I very closely watch and constantly criticise; but, on the whole, I am satisfied that they are, perhaps, the best conducted institutions in this country.'

And now, perhaps, the reader may be wondering what particular qualification I may have for essaying to write upon this subject. If so, let me seek to answer him.

My first experience among the criminal classes began some twenty years ago, when I regularly visited the low lodging-houses and thieves' kitchens of London, and where we were able to preach the Gospel both on the week-night and the Sunday. This naturally threw me a great deal into the company of some of the lowest and most desperate characters, and when, after some years of constantly going in and out amongst such people, I would hear them talk of one of their friends who had been 'lagged,' and 'fullied,' and wanted a 'mouthpiece,' or of another who had 'got off with five stretch,' such language was as intelligible to me as the Queen's English, although sometimes accompanied with words not altogether Parliamentary.

Being interested and engaged in criminal reformation, I have visited different prisons when the prisoners have been discharged, and taken part in the services conducted for their benefit, when, after a good breakfast has been given to all who have accepted the invitation, the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has been preached.

Many tales of sorrow and of woe have I listened to on such occasions; and blessed is the work in which some of our friends are engaged, specially that of Mr. Wheatley, of the St. Giles's Christian Mission.

Add to the above that I have visited all our convict prisons and all our London prisons, from gloomy Newgate, with its many old and historic reminiscences, and through whose precincts a Jack Sheppard and a Jonathan Wild have wended their way, to the more

modern and well-ventilated and comfortably warmed Pentonville, containing some eleven hundred prisoners ; from Dartmoor, bleak and barren, where the Claimant served nearly seven years, to Portsmouth, where he resided in an extra large cell, and where also Benson, of the 'Turf Frauds' notoriety, whiled away his time mending stockings in the 'Doctor's party' ; from Woking, truly called the 'Thieves' Palace,' where I have seen the recreation room with its draughts, dominoes, sofas, and paintings on the wall (not to mention an aviary), to Chatham, the much dreaded place by all convicts, and where Bidwell, one of the American forgers, was 'doing' a life sentence ; and thus, having seen all I can see, and read all that is worth reading on the subject, and being neither a convict nor a Government official, neither in sympathy with the one nor a friend of the other, but an independent, disinterested, and honorary visitor of our prisons, I think I may lay claim to some little right and qualification to speak on this important subject.

My evangelistic work being known to the Secretary of State, I asked for permission to visit our own prisons ; and I desire first to speak of what I have seen in connection with Her Majesty's convict settlements. You cannot always get the truth from an ex-convict, unless (as in one case, known to me, of a man who had done thirty-seven years' penal servitude) he becomes converted to God, and then he will tell the truth. There are many convicts known to me—some I will speak of briefly—who have been brought to God through the truths and the words that they have read in their prison cells from their Bibles. There are some men in English prisons who are perfectly incorrigible ; but there are some mothers' sons who, in an hour of weakness, have slipped and fallen, and who have been herded with the habitual criminals ; and there is the hope of reaching such by a kind word or a kind act. Let me give you two or three instances of these two classes.

They generally put a man to his own trade in prisons,

when he has fulfilled his term of nine months' separate confinement. When he has been there that time, he is generally put to work at a trade. They asked one of these incorrigibles once what trade he would like to be put to. 'Well,' he said, 'if you ask me, I should like to be a *traveller*.' But they keep far too close a watch upon them to allow them to travel far from the prison walls.

I know the case of one man who had done a second term of penal servitude, and was not released till the last hour of his sentence. He might have been released eighteen months before on ticket-of-leave; and he went out without a penny to make a fresh start in life, and he could have gone out possessed of £6. The governor said to him, 'Now, Williams, what are you going to do? Why don't you make a turn for the better?' 'Oh,' he said, 'it is all right, governor. I am going into business now.' 'Well, but,' said the governor, 'you have not a friend in the world, and you have not a penny in your pocket.' He replied, 'Well, I intend opening a jeweller's shop.' The governor said, 'It requires capital to do that. You cannot go into business without money.' 'Money?' he said; 'you can always get a crowbar for a tanner!' That was his way of *opening a jeweller's shop*!

The difference between imprisonment with hard labour and penal servitude is not generally and distinctly known; the longest term of imprisonment is two years, and the shortest term of penal servitude is five years. There was a three years' sentence, but it has been abolished some time. The horrors of penal servitude, except to the most incorrigible and depraved, must be dreadful, and can hardly be overrated. Were it possible for these lines to fall into the hands of some graduate of crime, some tyro in vice, some slave to strong drink, let me warn him of where his steps may lead him, and assure him of the punishment which will be his should he become a convict. Every convict forfeits his clothes, and if he lives to complete his sentence he will be given a new suit of clothes on the morning of his discharge. The most

dreadful part of his sentence is the first nine months, during which time he is doing his 'separates,' which means he will have to eat, and work, and live in separate, close confinement, in a cell about ten feet by seven, during the whole of that time. An ordinary prisoner's dress is not very becoming—that of a convict is hideous. Soon after conviction he would be sent to one of the two 'reception' prisons, when, after being cropped as closely as possible,—both head and face,—he would appear in a suit of light brown, short jacket and vest, and knicker-bockers, with blue stockings having red stripes round them, the whole suit being profusely decorated with the broad arrow. I have seen all sorts and conditions of men, at home and abroad, but a more horrible and repelling set of human creatures than a batch of convicts 'on parade' at an English penal settlement I have never seen. This is partly owing to the dress, and to the fact that sin leaves its stamp upon the countenance.

I have seen the prisons of Holland, Belgium, Italy, and America, and have but lately returned from a visit to those of France, and am thus enabled to compare them with our own; and, whilst there is much to commend in our own system, there are certain things which call loudly for reform. The governor of Portland Convict Prison said to me one day, 'I have only known two cases of real reformation in thirty-five years, one of whom was a gentleman standing high in our legislature, and who evidenced by years of consistent conduct the genuineness of the change.' Of course he referred to R—, who laboured in the stone quarries here for some time, but who, after his conversion, was of such immense use as a nurse in the infirmary. I would close this chapter by giving the experience of one who has felt the horrors of some years of isolation from all refined and cultured society, to which he had been accustomed. It is both pathetic and tragic.

'The first two years of penal servitude are the hardest to bear, and test mental endurance more than the whole

of the remainder of an ordinary sentence. Liberty has only just been parted with. The picture of the outside world is still imprinted upon the memory, and home and friends, and perhaps a dearer object still, are made to haunt the recollection whenever the association of ideas recalls some incidents of happier days.

‘ Of these two years the unhappiest portion is comprised in the nine or ten months which must be spent in what is called “ probation ”—solitary confinement in Millbank or Pentonville ; and while “ solitary ” is not much dreaded by ordinary prisoners at a later stage of penal existence, it is truly a terrible ordeal to undergo at the commencement.

‘ In Millbank this is especially so. The prison is but a few hundred yards west of Westminster Palace, from whence comes every quarter of an hour the voice of Big Ben, telling the listening inmates of the penitentiary that another fifteen minutes of their sentence have gone by ! What horrible punishment has not that clock added to many an unfortunate wretch’s fate, by counting for him the minutes during which stone walls and iron bars will a prison make. Then again there are the thousand and one noises that penetrate the lonely cells and silent corridors of that cheerless abode. Now it is the strains of a band from St. James’s Park, “ bringing back to the memory merry days long gone by ” ; next it is the whistle of the railway engine, with its suggestiveness of a journey “ home ” ; and so on, during the long weary days and nights, until the terrible idea of suicide is forced across the mind as the only mode of release from the horrible mockery of the noisy, joyful world beyond the boundary walls.

‘ It is not surprising that many men have gone mad in Millbank. I was but a few weeks an inmate when I had to witness a sad incident of the kind. We were at prayers one morning in the chapel, and the choir, made up of prisoners, was singing a well-known hymn. The air to which the words were sung was one of joyousness and hope, such as would easily cause a listener to travel back

to the schoolboy period of life, and dwell again on a time ere prisons or suffering were much thought of. Suddenly a wild, heart-bursting cry rang out above the voices of the singers, from a convict of some forty-five years of age, a few seats removed from where I was seated. He rushed towards the altar with piercing shrieks, while his eyes and face proclaimed the sudden loss of reason, and the presence of madness. I thought at the time that the hymn, or the air to which it was being sung, might have brought up to the wretched man's memory the voices of his children and the thought of the years that must elapse—years of penal servitude, too—before he could again see or hear them, and that under the frightful strain upon the mind and heart he suddenly became a raving maniac.'

CHAPTER VI.

PRISON EXPERIENCES.

VARIED are the experiences of the different classes who pass through our penal establishments. With many, thank God, their first visit is their last; and when they come under the faithful, loving ministry of a devoted chaplain, it is often the means of their conversion to God. The author of 'Five Years' Penal Servitude' speaks very highly of the Chaplain of Newgate—here are his own words :—

Here let me express how highly I appreciate this gentleman. During my stay in Newgate, which was for many weeks, I received from him the very kindest treatment. Without being obtrusive, he kindly and lovingly urged his great Master's message. How often have I since recalled to mind the many little acts of kindness, and the encouraging, really sweet words of comfort, 'words in season,' I have received from him! and frequently now do I remember more than one conversation we have had together. I visit London occasionally, when business or family matters require me to do so, and several times have I seen him in the streets, and have been sorely tempted to go and make myself known, and thank him once again for all he did for me during those dreadful weeks I spent at Newgate. Never have I met a man more fitted for his office than he is. Few men have the gift—and it is a gift which many good men try in vain to attain—of dropping in a few seasonable words, conveying comfort judiciously mingled with reproof, that Mr. Jones possesses. Without being obtrusive, with a complete absence of anything approaching to 'cant,' he has the happy knack of just saying to an erring man the right thing at the right time, and in the right way. If I read him aright, no one would sooner see through the hypocritical dodges of the 'very repentant sinner,' or give less encouragement to mock sighs and crocodile tears of the man who 'doth protest too much,' and who is far too ready to be 'converted' by the 'parson's patter' if he sees

a chance of its getting him any prison indulgence. I only wish more of our Church clergy were like this truly worthy man. If half our English churches had incumbents like him, it would be a blessing to our country. Should these pages ever meet his eye, let him have the satisfaction of knowing that one, at any rate, of his 'parishioners' thinks of him with gratitude, not merely for his acts of kindness in a time of bitter, deep adversity, but for having caused a new light to spring up in his heart.

It was from the preaching of Mr. Jones I first grasped and realised the pure, great, simple fact that salvation was free, perfectly free, to every one who would really, truly, and as 'a little child' accept it, with a full determination to repent truly, and, by God's help,—help to be obtained only but surely by fervent, sincere prayer,—strive to lead a new life. He also taught me the great fact that man needs no one to stand between himself and his God but Christ, his Saviour; and no man, priest or layman, ordained or unordained, consecrated or not, to be a go-between or medium between Jesus and sinful man. I always feel grateful to this prison chaplain, and were it not that I dare not, for my children's sakes, some of whom have never known of my disgrace, or where 'father travelled to those long four years,' make myself known to him, I would seek him out and personally thank him for all he did for me.

But when we speak of the habitual criminal—the 'old lag,' as he is termed—we find a very different person; and from my own knowledge of these men—with here and there an exception—they are seldom reformed, to say nothing of a higher change. Certainly I do know of one case, of whom I hope to speak more particularly, who after 'doing' nearly forty years in penal servitude was soundly converted under the Bishop of Rochester, and is now, and has been for years, living a consistent, humble Christian life; but with the vast majority of our criminals, their endeavour is to get through their sentence in the easiest possible manner, while the punishment is far less to them than it would be to those referred to at the beginning of this chapter. Some years ago talking was permitted during the hour of exercise, and the following communications were given to the above writer, during the time he spent at Dartmoor, by two of his fellow-convicts. He says:—

In the afternoon I was mated with another man, but quite as communicative. Until we were in the parade ground and on the march round we were not allowed to talk.

' You come down with the last batch from the Bank, didn't yer ? ' commenced my companion. ' Ah, I thought so. What's yer dose ? ' Looking on to my badge, ' Five ; oh, you can do that little lot on yer 'ed easy. I've twelve this go. I did a lagging of seven, and was at the Gib. three out of it. ' Ow did I like it ? Only wish they'd send me there again. Why they serves you out 'bacca there reg'lar every week. I was servant to one of the officers, and had a blooming good time of it till the cholera came, and then I didn't care how soon they'd a sent me 'ome. Yes, I was frightened. You see cholera ain't like 'nother disease, it don't give a feller no time. Why, I've stood next a bloke in the mornin' at early muster, and a 'elped to bury him the same night. It's so blooming 'ot a chap must be buried at once, 'e won't keep. Oh no, I wasn't officer's servant all my time. It was only after the cholera cleared off a lot of prisoners, and soldiers too, and he couldn't get no one else, that he took me. Afore that I worked in the galleries, a-making the casemates for the guns, and blooming hard work it was. We also made great tanks to 'old the water. Some of the chaps couldn't stand the 'eat, but I could ; we weren't dressed in such togs as these 'ere, but had white canvas jumpers and trousers. Did any one ever get away ? Ah, I just believe they did, too. The Spaniards would always 'elp a bloke if he was once over the lines. They weren't like the blooming fellows about this place, who pounce on a poor devil and give 'im up directly, for the sake of the blooming five quid that the Government gives 'em. This 'ere Dartmoor is a blessed sight better than Chatham, I can tell you. There's many a bloke there as is druv to suicide, it's such a 'ell upon earth. One chap while I was there threw himself down in front of the engine as works the trucks of earth out of the new dock and was cut in half. He'd been bashed twice, and the blooming warder had been going on at him till he couldn't stand it no longer, and he ups with a pick and chucks it straight at 'un and 'it 'im on the shoulder, and then 'e see the engine a-coming, so 'e saved 'em the trouble of bashing 'im again and chucked hisself bang in front of it, and it soon settled 'im. The men are drove into being reg'lar devils by being constantly down upon by the blooming officers. Them as 'as any pluck in 'em turns savage, and them as 'asn't, they knocks under, as I did, and gets ill, and lots on 'em dies. I got sent to Portland. Yes, that's better than Chatham a blooming sight. I was in the infirmary there after I'd been there a month, and there was that Member of Parliament, Roupell. He was 'ospital orderly, and a very good one too. What d'ye say ? Who's that tall man standing at the latrine door ? Oh, that's one of the cleverest gentlemen cracksmen out. 'E's been in some real good things, 'e 'as. The blooming crushers were precious glad when they "pinched" 'im. 'E's been to France, to Paris, and over to America. I see we're a-going in now, and I 'avn't time, but I could tell you some fine yarns about him.'

On another occasion his walking companion (for in those days they exercised in couples) seemed to be quite a different stamp of man, and one who evidently worked with a woman. He goes on to say:—

He seems to have availed himself of the services of the fair sex, and always had some woman living with him who worked with him in one or other of his dishonest ways. Once, when he was speaking of ‘his old woman’ for the time being, I asked if she was a ‘crooked’ one too.

‘Oh, yes,’ he replied; ‘I never had nothin’ to do with any “gal” who couldn’t cut her own grass.’

‘Cut her own grass! Good gracious, what is that?’ I asked..

‘Why, purvide her own chump—earn her own living,’ the old man replied.

He spoke of this particular lady with great regret, and as having been quite a proficient.

‘I used to go with her as “stall.” Don’t yer know what a “stall” is? Why, to be convenient, handylike in the way to stow the ‘foulcher’ when she’s nobbled it. Lor, she were a rare un! I’ve know’d her just walk in at one door of Swan & Edgar’s and look at a thing or two, and come out with a foulcher, with flimsies and couters for a score of quid in it. She *were* a fine woman, and togged like a lady right up to the knocker—I never did meet with the like of her. We once went together to Cowes regatta, and blessed if going over in the steamer from Southampton she didn’t lift a swell of his russia, with flimsies for £300 in it. She gave me the office, and I soon had it. She returned at once in the next boat, and I quietly walked about till another one started, and in the meantime took a chance to overhaul what she’d nobbled. What! try it on to sling my hook after a few foulchers and tickers when I know’d I’d three hundred quid safe?—not I. I went into a public, and slipped away to the rear; there I opened the swell’s russia, took out the sweet little flimsies, and stowed them safe; then I got a few stones off the beach. As we was a-going back in the boat to Southampton I quietly dropped a little parcel over for the fishes. It was the swell’s russia—a russia, you know, is a pocket-book—with them there stones off the beach to take it safe down to the bottom. They sort of things are very dangerous to keep. What did I do with the flimsies? Well, I’ll tell you. I went straight up to town by the first train, and soon found out the old woman. When I told her there was three hundred quid she *was* pleased. I proposed we should go and have a booze. Not a bit—she wouldn’t even let me smell a drain more than I’d had. We went down to a bloke I knew up in one of the streets leading off the Euston Road who did a little on the “cross” now and again, to see what he’d stand

for the £300. He offered £200. Well, as it was her catch I thought as I'd consult along of her whether we should take the £200. "No," says she, "we've got some more besides that, and enough, too, to take us to France. Blowed, old man, if we don't go to Paris, and there we can get £300 for them." Well, she could do the French's patter, as she'd been there afore, when she was living on the "square." She were a she-flunkey, lady's maid, once—that's how she know'd all about being a swell lady. Oh, she was a buster too! Well, we started next day, after shutting up the crib where we hung out, and we did very well in Paris for two months. I came across some English sporting blokes as was attending on some swell cove's race-horses over there for their races, and we had a blooming fine time of it; but I wanted to get back; I'd had enough of foreign patter and ways, so I told the old girl we'd best hook it. She'd a-stayed on if I'd a-let her, and I'm blooming sorry I didn't; for the very next day as we got back to London she went up to some of the swell streets at the West End to see another gal, a pal of hers, and they went somewhere together. Well, when they was in a shop this pal of hern got slinging her hook after a swell lady's ticker, and made such a blooming hash of it that she was bowled out at once. They called in the coppers, and some feller in the shop twigged my old girl as one he'd a-seen before, and blessed if they didn't identify her as having lifted some things out of the shop, and she was pinched for seven "stretch." Ah, she was a stunner, too, she were! I were sorry for her. No, I never see her again. You see when her time would have been up I was doing my ten, and of course a gal like her would not be long before she'd get another bloke to take up with her.'

Michael Davitt tells us of one incorrigible convict with whom he came into contact in this same prison. The following is the story:—

'I was startled while at work one day in Dartmoor by seeing a man leap off the seat next mine, in a shed where our party was stone-breaking, as if he had been cast by a giant into the middle of the place, there fall upon his back, and go through the most horrible writhings I had ever witnessed. His eyes appeared as if bursting from their sockets, blood and foam oozed from his mouth, while four other prisoners could scarcely hold his arms, so fearfully was his body convulsed, forming altogether one of the most sickening sights I ever beheld.

'After three or four minutes apparent agony he quieted down, and was carried off to the infirmary. Being an

exceedingly intelligent young fellow, I could not help expressing to the warder what a pity it was that one so full of life and health should be afflicted with so terrible a malady as fits ; whereupon he simply gave me for reply a look which, if capable of being put into action, would bode no good to the back of the prisoner just removed to the hospital as an afflicted wretch, apparently deserving of the commiseration of any man possessing the feelings of ordinary humanity. "Yes, it is a pity," he answered at last, and strode away, as if leaving unuttered "that the doctor will not report him to the director for a flogging !"

'Only a few days elapsed after this incident, until I found myself almost of the same opinion. The object of my pity returned to his work after three days' hospital treatment, and I took the first opportunity that offered to fall in file with him at evening exercise, to learn how he became subject to such an affliction. I was thunderstruck at the reply which he made to my inquiry : "I never had a real fit in my life ! What you saw the other day was what we call 'CHUCKING A DUMMY,' or, as you might name it, in your less expressive manner of speaking, 'counterfeiting a fit.' Why, bless you, we sometimes make good use of this dodge when a number of us go to 'do' a chapel, or meeting-place of would-be pious individuals. In the most appropriate part of the proceedings one of us 'chucks a dummy.' There is, of course, an immense sensation created in the audience,—women come with their scent bottles, men rush for water, great sympathy is expressed by others,—whilst the hooks* are all the time busy at the pockets of the pitying crowd, and easing them of their purses. Half-a-dozen of us have taken upwards of fifty pounds out of a congregation on one Sunday evening by means of this trick.'

"But do you not consider you are making it bad for those poor wretches who really are so afflicted by doing that revolting action here ?" I ventured to object.

"Well, as to that," he answered, "you might as well

* See Chap. IV., Thieves' Language.

plead on behalf of those who lose their purses. I chucked that one the other day in order to get removed from the cell I was in, which was next to that of a blooming swine whom I did not like; and I had no other excuse with which to go to the infirmary until my cell would be filled by some one else, so that I should be located elsewhere."

These cases prove how difficult it is to deal justly with convicts. They are 'up to all the moves on the board,' and the governor down to the assistant-warder has need to have 'all his wits about him' in dealing with such characters.

Passing through Portsmouth Convict Prison some years ago in company with the chief warder, I noticed the Claimant to the Tichborne estate, and whatever the public opinion was as to the validity of his claims, the prison authorities soon made up their minds concerning him. He was in one of the yards, engaged in sawing up wood, and apparently prison diet had somewhat reduced him in weight. The 'chief' told me that he gave them no end of trouble, and was always complaining, which brought him into collision and into bad odour with the warders. Passing into the interior of the prison, I saw Benson,* of the 'Turf Frauds' notoriety, who, when in Newgate, had set fire to himself; here he was in the 'Doctor's party' by reason of professed sickness, but some months later he was turned out as a 'maligner.'

A splendid specimen of a man was at work in the kitchen as we entered, standing over six feet high, with a most intelligent-looking face, which I could but be struck with as he lifted the lids of the boilers, to show me the cocoa and tea in preparation for the meals of the prisoners. What a thousand pities such a man should be wasting his life in this place! It was the younger Bidwell, the American forger, who, with his brother, succeeded in getting from the Bank of England £100,000, £80,000 of which was recovered. He pleaded GUILTY, and said, 'My lord, I ask you for mercy; it is man-like to ask for it; it is God-like

* Benson has since committed suicide in an American prison.

to show it.' They were both sentenced to penal servitude for life, which proved they did not receive much mercy at the hands of their earthly judge, for no heavier sentence could have been passed upon them.

How differently God deals with the sinner! He is 'ready to pardon' all who come to Him in penitence, seeking His forgiveness through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: for judgment is His strange work, but 'He delighteth in mercy.'

As at the time of writing this I have just received a letter from George Bidwell (brother of above), who was released after fifteen years' imprisonment, and who has been in America since his release in 1887, I feel inclined to give utterance to his testimony concerning the cruelty of some of the warders under whom he was placed. I have carefully read his book through entitled 'Forging his Chains,' and I must say it is well and thoughtfully written; and while on his own confession he appears to have been constantly in trouble,—solitary confinement, wearing of chains, and other forms of punishment,—and bearing in mind all that the previous part of this chapter speaks of, yet if what George Bidwell says is true, or half true, of strait-jackets and electric batteries,—and I think there is a possibility of it being so,—there needs something done in the way of inquiry as to the brutal treatment of convicts by some warders.

I am sure that some warders have taken delight in irritating the men under them, in the hopes of their doing something which would cause them to be reported to the governor; and many of the cases of assaults on warders, if inquired more carefully into, would be found to have sprung out of some exasperating action on the part of an irritable warder. I give an instance or two where men have been needlessly annoyed, and though it is the evidence of an ex-convict, yet I can vouch for its truth.

'It is the rule, when a man has run out his time to three months, for him to go up to the governor and get permission to grow his hair and beard. About four months

before my time was up I had been to the governor and petitioned to have the marks I had lost, equivalent to three weeks time, restored to me. I had been reported twice for trivial matters and lost forty-eight marks each time, and the rest had been lost, not through misconduct, but by regulations as to short time that I myself had not any control over. The Major received my petition very kindly, and said that he had no power himself to grant the remission, but the director would be down in a few days, and he would lay it before him and back it up. Thinking to kill two birds with one stone, I asked for permission to grow my hair. This the governor said should be granted me. I, and every one else, considered that the permission dated from there and then, and when I got back I told Mr. H—— so. He inquired of the principal of the week, who confirmed what I said. Consequently I was not called out to be cropped, although there was no order entered on the books of the ward from the governor's office. About three weeks after this the director, Captain S——, came down, and on hearing my application, and taking into consideration the special work I had been then doing, he gave me my full remission, and at the time this was entered in the books the order for my hair-growing was also entered.

‘A principal warder, named K——, a waspish little fellow who bore me no goodwill, a man I disliked much, was the principal on duty that day at No. 1, where the punishment cells and governor's audience-room are situated, and he of course saw the book and the entries. Before the orders were sent from the governor's clerk to the different prisons, he came down and told D—— exactly how matters stood, and if possible to give me a crop before the order-book arrived in the ward. Immediately after supper D—— called me out, greatly to my own and every one else's astonishment, to be cropped. I naturally protested, and told him I had got the permission. He asked me to point out my name on the list of those to whom permission had been granted, and which hung up

in the ward. Of course my name, for the reason I have stated, was not there, and I had to submit, and was cropped as close as scissors could cut. Before the evening was out the order came down and my name was entered on the list. I am quite convinced it was a planned thing with K——. I took good care it should get to the governor's ears how I had been served, and I think before I left K—— was more sorry about the thing than I was.

'Things like this petty tyranny it is that bring up the devil in men's hearts and brains, and many cases of outbreak and assaults on warders by prisoners may be traced to a series of such irritating persecutions. Some warders take a delight in causing a prisoner all the possible inconvenience they can, knowing the man cannot retaliate or even protect himself.

'The reader must remember that all these little apparently trivial matters become great, if not important items, in the existence of men who are entirely shut in from the outer world; with whom, in the absence of any other events to occupy the mind and attention, the smallest things become magnified, and constitute themselves events of much greater importance in the daily routine of a monotonous life utterly devoid of change or any excitement. In the busy life of the outer world there is so much to occupy men's minds and attention that trifles are unheeded which in the daily existence of a convict become matters of interest and importance. So also it is on a long voyage. Those of my readers who have passed many months on board ship will understand well what I mean, and know how the temper and real grit of every man is severely tried and tested.

'I have already spoken of a brute of a fellow known as "Long-nosed S——," an assistant warder. He has, when on duty in our ward, looked deliberately round to see whom he can annoy, in hopes of making the man do or say something for which he can report him. Several times I have noticed him first look to see which gas-burner threw its light upon the book which I have been reading,

and then deliberately place himself directly in the way, so as to cast a shadow on my book and if possible to prevent my reading. It was most annoying, and at first I used to try all manner of ways to sit and hold my book so as to escape his shadow. I found that only amused him, so I tried another plan ; and though I could not see clearly to read, particularly if it was small print, I would take no notice, and sit just as if there was no shade over me. After a while he would leave me, and go to some other man and do the same thing.'

Such a man as this is utterly unfit to have men under his charge, and it may be that it is to such actions that one of Her Majesty's prisons contained (when I visited it) an alarming number of men in chains, whilst the punishment cells were nearly full. In striking contrast to this prison was Chatham, where NO MAN was in chains, and where Captain Harris is the governor, and who humanely remarked to me as he conducted me round, 'In all my dealings, sir, with these people I remember they are still my fellow-men.'

I remember in America a very hardened criminal, a woman who had been subjected to all the punishments and privations it was possible for the officials to serve out to her, and who at last was transferred in chains to another gaol, where a very devout and godly matron was in charge. The warder in charge of the woman told the matron her character, and bade her be very strict and careful with her. 'Please to take off those chains and fetters,' replied the lady. 'Oh ! but I dare not take that responsibility,' said the warder ; 'you do not know what she is like.' 'No matter ; I am mistress here, and we can have no women in chains in this prison : I will take all the responsibility.' Accordingly the fetters were removed ; and when the male guardians had gone, the lady went over to the prisoner and said, 'Now, Mary, you are going to be a good child here, and I am going to be your good mother' ; with that, she kissed her ; and down that kissed cheek the tears fell full and fast. Kindness and

love once again had conquered ! No report was *ever known* against this woman afterwards, and she is now one of the most active Christian workers in that particular city.

I do not even suggest that all criminals should be thus treated or trusted, but I would wish matrons and warders were of this stamp, and that our English prisoners and convicts were treated more in the spirit which this lady exercised towards her prisoner.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STORY OF AN EVENTFUL LIFE.

THE ex-convict whose story I here tersely tell has been known to me for a considerable time ; he has been earning an honest living for years, has spoken at my meetings, and is respected by many leading Christians in London. The Rev. F. Jewell says of him : 'We had many opportunities of watching this man, and it became evident that the Lord had wrought a great work of grace in his heart, and thoroughly changed him. He was a new creature in Christ Jesus ; and, true to his new state, he yearned to be the means of bringing others to the Saviour. He began to show an aptitude for street preaching, and a zeal which led him to do more than could be expected of any man.' And this after nearly forty years of prison life—truly he is 'a brand plucked from the burning' ; but so much as I know of his eventful life I here relate.

Born in the East End of London in 1832, in the midst of misery and sin,—yet blessed with the great gift of a God-fearing mother, whose tender, loving heart never gave him up, but continued to pray for him till she saw him enjoying the 'liberty of the sons of God,' as well as the liberty which is enjoyed by every honest man in England,—a band of bad boys first led him astray ; and these lads made no scruple of stealing ('nicking,' they called it) any mortal thing they could lay their hands on, provided there was a reasonable hope they could escape

detection, or 'do a guy,' which, being interpreted, means run away into a place of safety. Before long W. H. had been induced to join them, with the inevitable result which follows the 'working' of a novice, and before he had reached his twelfth birthday he was in the 'stur,' otherwise called 'steel,' a corruption of Bastille. Almost directly after his release, he was arrested, with another boy, for stealing from a tradesman's till ; but was on this occasion released. The mother still prayed to God and pleaded with the boy, but to no effect apparently. While in employment in Drury Lane, he made friends with a gang of pickpockets, and speedily acquired a marvellous degree of expertness ; for he has told me that at this time he had kept as many as 'three men going in the disposing of the property.' Another expert in this business declared that he could rob with impunity 'ninety-nine persons out of every hundred.' 'Keep your "dukes" well greased with butter every night, and you're all right ; besides, it's all ready money, and little risk ; passing "shise coin" is all very well, but I reckon I'm on a better "lay" than that.'

But to return to our boy. I should have said that he had the misfortune to lose his father when he was but a year old. At the age of sixteen he had become more desperate and hardened. About this time he was again 'in trouble,' and in the early part of 1848 was tried and sentenced to ten years' transportation ; though it was not till the beginning of 1851 he was shipped on board the *Mermaid* for Western Australia, with about three hundred convicts on board. For five months he was associated with some of the vilest criminals of the day, who no doubt helped to complete his education in criminal practices and to form his character, for in after days he returned to England to put in operation what he had learned when in their company.

After serving one-half of his sentence in the colony in a somewhat easy way, he received a conditional pardon ; and then joined an American whaler, in company with some

of the very men who sailed with him from England. In this vessel he was, with others, embroiled in a mutiny, and when they reached the Sundy Straits he was in irons. To escape being charged with mutiny when she arrived at her destination he elected to go ashore, and ultimately reached Singapore ; then taking ship to Calcutta, and so on to London aboard the *Glenorchie*, he arrived at the home of his poor mother, the widow, in March 1855.

One can imagine the praying mother bending over her prodigal son with unchanging affection, rejoicing over her long-lost boy,—seeing in him returned the part answer to her many prayers, and urging him to live that better and that nobler life for which she had so often prayed for when he was younger.

At this time he says : 'I thought myself sufficiently strong to leave off the old life, but soon came back the craving for old associations and old companions. I could not resist, and within a very few weeks I was again in prison ; and again, in 1858, I was sentenced to three years' imprisonment.'

This sentence completed and again free, the old temptations are too strong for him ; drink and the theatre were all-powerful in their fascinating attractions, and to obtain the means for the gratification of these cravings he has to resort to crime in the absence of honest work.

Now comes a term of 'five years,' and whilst serving part of this time in Millbank he is constantly thrown into the company of several of the Fenian prisoners.

Persons who have visited Millbank will remember the houses of the governor, the deputy-governor, etc., were all in the Hexagon ; and if my informant speaks the truth (and I have not the least doubt of it), there were some strange goings on between the servants of the different houses and the prisoners. Money and tobacco were quite plentiful, whilst letters came and were sent out to many parts of the world. All that *could* be said would hardly be believed by many, but those who get behind the scenes, and who know something of what 'trafficking'

means, would not be much surprised if I were to write far more than appears above.

Removed to Dartmoor, he speaks very strongly of the harsh and cruel treatment experienced at the hands of warders. He admits he grew more and more desperate ; every ray of good feeling, and all his better nature, seemed to vanish under the fearfully severe and hardening treatment he there received ; and, in return, confesses that he was guilty of such recklessness of conduct and insubordination as few other men in the prison were guilty of. Solitary confinement, the cross-irons, and short diet seemed only to alternate ; and naturally his health began to suffer, though he must have possessed a physique and constitution of the finest character.

Constantly searched, stripped at all hours, whether in winter or summer, kept in punishment and especially strong cells, under observation, with double-locked doors, watched and guarded more like a wild beast than a human being, without one ray of hope or softening influence, he finished this sentence, and in November 1865 he was again a free man.

Surely, with the memory of the past mental anguish and physical torture, he will now have had warning enough. Will not the mother's prayers prevail now ? Alas ! within seven weeks of his release he is again apprehended, and again sentenced to 'five years.' The same dull routine,—the first nine months in solitude, called 'doing his separates' ; then on to the Public Works,—month after month and year after year drafted from one prison to another, until the time slowly drags itself round ; and one fine spring morning, when flowers are blooming and sparrows chirrupping, our gaol-bird, who during the previous three months has been growing his feathers, once more flies to the old home in London. Mother is there ! the only link that binds him to God ; his only hope ; the only light in his dark life ; unchanged in her affections ; unfailing in her care ; unfaltering in her trust in God ; unceasing in her prayer, 'God save my

boy, for Christ's sake, amen.' Shall those prayers be unanswered? It almost seemed like it; for to the widow's heart there came the news, the crushing climax, that he had just been tried and sentenced to *fourteen years' penal servitude*. This was a terrible blow to the good mother, who had until now hoped against hope—still she was not in despair. God remained and faith remained, though she wept bitterly, when she visited him some months later,—evidently dreading lest she should die before he again obtained his freedom. Apparently he was touched: he did all he could to comfort her, urging her to forget his very existence, if possible; but all in vain. She left him assuring him she would constantly pray for him, and trusting he would conduct himself well, if only to enable her to occasionally hear from him,—otherwise he would not enjoy the privilege of writing a letter or receiving a visit.

The fact of his previous outbreaks and desperate character caused him to be subjected to much more severe treatment than would otherwise have been the case. He lately said to me:—

Looking back on those days, it seems, at this distance of time, that I was treated with unnecessary harshness, and subjected to exceptionally severe discipline. A character once gained sticks by a man, and it takes a great deal to induce a change in the minds of prison officials, when once they have a pre-conceived idea regarding an old convict. Assuredly it was so in my case. My patience was tested oftentimes to the bursting strain, and I could ill brook a charge of idleness, when sheer inability alone prevented my completing a task assigned to me. But a change in me was now foreshadowed, since I did my very best to perform the work given me, though often feeling worn out and thoroughly unhappy. A visit from my mother touched my heart. I told her of my sufferings and misery, and she answered me, 'You must try and bear it. Look what Christ suffered for you and me.' When she left she begged and prayed me to behave myself, and evidently still looked forward to the time when I should be to her the comfort and help of her declining years. The thought of my mother influenced me much for good, and the memory of her assurance that her prayers to God were ever that He would care for me, and bring me to Himself, forms a bright spot in my recollection.

After he had served some few years of his last sentence, and while in chapel in Chatham prison, one morning the Chaplain announced that there was to be a fortnight of special services, with a fresh preacher every day. So strange an announcement caused considerable stir; curiosity and interest were aroused in the minds of many—our incorrigible among others. Service after service was attended by him: with what result? Has he hardened his heart, and with a seared conscience defied God? Has he left the chapel questioning the mercy of God by reason of the cruelties experienced at the hands of man? Nay, verily. What then? Has the Day-star arisen in his heart? Has the story of a Saviour's love reached this hardened man? Has this prodigal returned home in answer to that widowed mother's prayers? Let us see! The Bishop of Rochester is the preacher of the day, and his text is taken from Job. xl. 5, 6,—“I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes”; and, as the speaker went on to speak of sin and salvation, this long-lost son says:—

As I listened I really and truly began to appreciate my relationship to a Heavenly Father. After listening to the preacher with careful and glad attention, for the first time in my life I began to see how I had sinned against Him, my Creator, my God, who, though hating sin and all uncleanness, had yet shown such boundless mercy to me. Then, too, came home to me, in the fulness of their meaning, those blessed words from John iii. 16, ‘For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ With the consciousness of my sin, and the knowledge of the great atonement, I at once loathed the sins of past years, and felt the need of pardon and salvation. I felt weighed down, and, longing for the peace of God in my heart, could not rest still laden with my sin. Then I called to mind John v. 24, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life’; and as I read I lifted my heart heavily to God, and sought Him, with this prayer filling my whole being, ‘I have heard Thy word; I do believe, and come to Thee as my Saviour.’ Henceforth I felt a confidence I had not hitherto possessed; Christ

was to me a living Saviour, and my sins were lifted off my soul. Brighter and happier dawned the days hereafter, and in the reading of my Bible I spent many happy hours, growing consciously in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord.

In 1874 he was removed from Chatham to Portsmouth, and in 1880 from Portsmouth to Parkhurst Prison in the Isle of Wight ; and soon after that received his discharge on ticket-of-leave, which meant that he would have to report himself every month until the expiring of his sentence.

He had chosen to join the Royal Prisoners' Aid Society, in the hope that they would be enabled to start him in some way which would enable him to earn his living, but he was sorely disappointed by the manner in which he was treated. Thus left to himself, he hired a barrow and for months sold salt in the streets, and by regularly frequenting certain streets soon picked up a number of regular customers, and thus became dependent only on his own efforts.

But what about the old mother ? I should have said that on his release he hastened to find her out ; she had been fortunate enough to obtain a home in one of the alms-houses of the Leather-sellers Company. Who shall paint that picture ? who *can* tell that story ? the meeting of the aged, praying mother, the widow, God-supported through all those weary years, and he, the saved, repentant son, after nearly forty years of prison life ! Surely truth is stranger than fiction ; and we can only say 'God is faithful' and 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.' She was nearing her end, however, and soon after, in May 1882, passed away to be 'for ever with the Lord' whom she had so long loved and trusted.

His ticket-of-leave expired on April 23rd, 1885, and shortly after that he had occasion to go to Scotland Yard, and he told them there of the grand change which had been effected in his heart and life. It is little to be wondered at that one there who knew him, and was acquainted with his career, should remark that 'He was

the strangest specimen of a Christian he had ever seen.' Strange and wonderful it seems to him, and yet the saving of his soul is a fact of which he has no doubt. A sure reliance on the finished work of Christ sustains him ; and he is proud to-day to number himself amongst the servants of our God and King.

His right name, I should add, is William Holmes, although he has been known to the police by many others.

CHAPTER VIII.

SENTENCES.

‘TWENTY years’ penal servitude,’ said Justice Charles.

‘Twelve months’ imprisonment,’ said Mr. Matthews, the Home Secretary, after public opinion had ventilated the matter. Both these sentences were uttered concerning one prisoner. The first-named gentleman, after passing the sentence, no doubt went home and enjoyed his dinner none the less because of the terrible infliction he had just doomed his fellow-man to ; but I take it, when he heard of the action of the Secretary of State, he was somewhat troubled in his mind ; and rightly so too, for the inequality of the above speaks for itself.

‘Penal servitude for life’ practically means ‘twenty years.’ It formerly meant ‘twelve years.’

Such was the sentence passed upon the four forgers who succeeded in getting £100,000 from the Bank of England, £80,000 of which was reclaimed. A rather severe sentence, when compared with a similar term of imprisonment meted out to a woman who poisons her husband, or a man who brutally murders his fellow.

There is a growing desire on the part of many that sentences should be shorter than some of our judges are in the habit of passing. At the time of my writing there is a Bill before Parliament to lessen the shortest term of penal servitude to ‘three years’ instead of five.

I fail to see the justice of giving a man ten or fifteen years for stealing an article worth a few shillings *because* he has previously been convicted and served five years

for a previous offence ; yet this is often done. I have met with many men thus unjustly dealt with, and I think that my own feelings in the matter will be shared by all interested in prison reform. Mr. Tallack, Secretary of the Howard Association, says :—

Is it any matter for surprise that thieves have of late manifested an increasing disposition to carry pistols and shoot the police, or any one likely to cause their arrest ? Are not murderous assaults the natural and almost necessary consequence of such shocking sentences as some of the above ? For if the perpetrators of petty thefts find, by experience, that they incur punishments of from ten to twenty years' duration for stealing a few water-cresses, herrings, fowls, or boots, why should they not risk a violent self-defence against the police or others, inasmuch as their punishment, in case of arrest, can hardly be worse than that inflicted hitherto for comparatively harmless delinquencies ? The law itself unwisely teaches them that atrocious crimes do not, in general, receive more vindictive retaliation, and very often not nearly so much, as little thefts committed to satisfy their hunger or clothe their nakedness.

I quote from this gentleman's works the following cases :—

'A.' after two minor committals to a local gaol, was convicted for stealing money, and sentenced to seven years' penal servitude, followed by seven years' police supervision. After all this he was re-convicted for stealing three shillings, and sentenced to another seven years' imprisonment, followed by a further seven years' supervision.

'B.' a weak-minded man, who had been once sent to gaol for a minor offence, was, for stealing a shirt, sentenced to five years' imprisonment and five years' supervision.

'D.' after some brief punishment in a gaol, was sentenced, for stealing a cup, to five years' imprisonment and seven years' supervision ; another disproportionate and unjust infliction !

'E.' who there is reason to believe was actually insane, was sentenced, for stealing a coat, to five years' imprisonment and five years more of supervision. He had had several convictions to gaol for other petty thefts.

'F.' furnishes a special illustration of the gross inequalities and anomalies which so often characterise English sentences. For stealing a piece of canvas, he was sentenced to twelve years' penal servitude, to be followed by seven years' supervision.

There is a monstrous disproportion and cruelty in such gigantic outbursts of passion on the part of legal 'Justice' so-called.

The Recorder of Liverpool (Mr. C. H. Hopwood, Q.C.), in charging the grand jury at the City Sessions on Wednesday, October 23rd, 1889, referred to the subject of the excessive punishment of criminals. He said :—

The total of offences throughout the kingdom was diminishing, and every year proved that long and accumulated punishment was unnecessary and cruel. The result of the action which he had adopted in that court had justified his fullest anticipations. Never once out of a total of two thousand prisoners committed for trial at that court during his presidency had penal servitude been, in his judgment, necessary. He was bound, therefore, to affirm his deliberate opinion that two-thirds of the imprisonment inflicted throughout the country, both on indictment and by summary conviction, was unnecessary, and might be remitted without any loss of security to property or of safety to the person. What a saving of human misery and of national expenditure, and what possibilities of individual amendment, might not result from a more moderate course. The fact was that this question of punishment had been too long regarded as a system on paper, and supported by theoretical anticipations, and without sufficient regard for human weakness and the overmastering temptations to which it was subjected. By the theory of previous convictions we had been brought to a theoretical view of treating these matters.

Referring to the above paragraph the *Daily News* of October 25th, 1889, says :—

How far we have wandered from the wise teachings of Bentham and Romilly in this regard is shown by some examples quoted of the results of a strained and pedantic application of the principle of increased sentences on proof of previous convictions. In one case a man was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude and five years' police supervision for stealing a garden fork. He had previously undergone seven years' penal servitude and two years' police supervision for stealing a rabbit-gin, and before that had been sentenced to four short terms for trifling depredations. Another man, after two minor imprisonments, was sentenced to five years for purloining some herrings and other provisions; and so forth. Severity of this sort, so far from diminishing, tends to increase crime. Such, at least, is the opinion of Mr. Hopwood, based upon much experience and patient observation.

An ex-convict who for nine years has been earning an honest living, and whose consistent Christian life is known to many gentlemen in London, and for whose truthfulness

I am prepared to answer, has assured me that the severity of the sentences, and the cruelties sometimes practised upon the defenceless convicts by some warders, tends to make them hard and callous and revengeful ; and he assures me he knows of one man who was twice sentenced to penal servitude, and in both cases he was innocent—though a professed criminal.

Surely men situated like this can only store up their revenge for the authorities or the public. A convict was once heard to say :—

Some one shall pay for this ; I've got five years for attempting to obtain ten shillings, which I utterly deny. They (the authorities) have ruined me, broke up my home, sent my poor wife on the streets, and my children to hell. Do you think I'm going to stand that ? No, sir, I'm an Englishman ; I'll wait my time, and I'll commit burglaries and robberies until I consider I am repaid. I'll have a good revolver and I'll shoot any one who interferes with me ; then, if captured, I'll blow my own brains out : God knows they have made me what I am.

It was found upon inquiry that he had been a respectable gas-fitter before he got into this trouble, that he was supposed to be innocent, that his conviction had brought frightful ruin on himself and on his family, and that he was undefended at his trial.

Short-term prisoners sometimes ask for a longer sentence, knowing that it carries with it a more liberal diet ; thus 'four months' hard labour' is infinitely preferred to three. I do think that under the present system 'a month's hard labour' is a most cruel sentence, and in this I am borne out, not only by those who have experienced it, but by all who have troubled themselves to inquire what it means.

Low diet, consisting principally of bread and gruel (no meat), with hard labour and the plank bed, at one time, seems rather severe on the sufferer ;—let there be hard labour by all means, or even the plank bed ; but to have all three combined is hardly consistent with justice, to say nothing of mercy.

I should like to see tried, instead of a sentence of 'seven

years' penal servitude,' a term extending over, say, three years; the first and last nine months being passed in solitary confinement (which should not be complete isolation), and the rest of the sentence on the Public Works, with careful supervision.

Without any comment I here add the testimony of the Rev. Mr. Maxwell, late Chaplain to H.M. Prison, Clerkenwell, who, writing in the *Evening News* some few years ago on our prison discipline and length of sentences, said, 'Our present system turns men out of prison either confirmed idiots or desperate villains.'

One of the best acts ever passed in connection with crime was the 'Probation of First Offenders Act,' which became law in 1887, and most beneficent results have accrued to many a youth. In many instances known to myself the presiding judge has permitted lads to be discharged to the care of Mr. W. Wheatley, of the St. Giles's Mission, thus saving the boys and their friends the stigma of conviction, which otherwise must have come upon them, and saved the youths themselves from being associated with criminals of all classes and degrees. I append the principal clause in the above act:—

In any case in which a person is convicted of larceny, or false pretences, or any other offence punishable with not more than two years' imprisonment, before any Court, and no previous conviction is proved against him, if it appears to the Court before whom he is so convicted, that, regard being had to the youth, character, and antecedents of the offender, to the trivial nature of the offence, and to any extenuating circumstances under which the offence was committed, it is expedient that the offender be released on probation of good conduct, the Court may, instead of sentencing him at once to any punishment, direct that he be released on his entering into a recognisance, with or without sureties, and during such period as the Court may direct, to appear and receive judgment when called upon, and in the meantime to keep the peace and be of good behaviour.

Thus many a parent and many a child have had much cause to be thankful for this merciful provision, this blending of mercy with justice, and the act has also tended no doubt to the diminishing of the number of our prisoners, and the lessening of the expenses of the country.

CHAPTER IX.

PRISON SYSTEMS COMPARED AND CONTRASTED.

I SUPPOSE few persons, if any, have had the experience of visiting so many of the prisons of the world as myself; not every one is permitted to visit such places, and as Mr. Tallack says, 'Their walls are as effectual in keeping critics out, as in keeping culprits in.'

I have noticed, in my wanderings in and out of the various prisons of the different countries I have visited, a tremendous contrast in the different systems: here the utmost liberty,—there the strictest discipline; in one case I have hardly been able to distinguish by her dress a prisoner from the matron who had charge of her,—in another place the apparel worn by the prisoner was hideous in the extreme; in one country I have seen an inmate eating raspberries, sweetstuff, and cakes;* in another land I have known a man eat a pound of candles through sheer hunger.

In *Cyprus* the inmates of the gaols are so well fed—'They feed them like fighting-cocks,' was the expression used by an Englishman—that numbers of persons were seeking to make themselves eligible for entrance. Many men have been punished for attempting to break out of prison, but I only know of one man who was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for *breaking into* a prison. Dartmoor was the place, and D—— was the man,—a coloured gentleman who had recently been discharged

* This was in New York, U.S.A.

therefrom. He threatened 'to murder the chief warden and set fire to the place.'

That my readers may not judge me guilty of exaggeration in respect to the refreshments I mention above, which I saw a prisoner solacing himself with, I append the following, which hails from *America*, and to those who have visited the prisons of that country it is not at all a matter of surprise; but here it is:—

At the National Prison Congress at Atlanta, Georgia, in 1886, a gathering was held which was described as the largest assemblage of the kind ever known in either continent. Some excellent addresses and papers were forthcoming on the occasion; but there was also so much morbid sentimentality propounded that one of the chief speakers complained that the Congress 'had gone off into the region of gush.' A number of foolish suggestions were made in favour of continuing and even increasing the practice of pampering criminals in prison. Dr. F. H. Wines wisely protested against this course, as having been already carried to a pernicious extreme in various States. He remarked, 'The fare in some prisons is alarmingly good.' At one gaol he had found that, for breakfast, the inmates had beefsteaks, hot biscuits, butter, and, in general, a bill of fare that would do credit to an hotel. For dinner they often had pies, after a full list of substantials; and preserves were frequently given to the prisoners with their tea.*

But lest the reader may think this is an exceptional case, I again quote from the same gentleman, and from another State, where he speaks of the dietary in what may be reckoned as the best prison in the United States, which certainly must often be a subject of envy to the poorest classes outside:—

A description of it, in Dr. F. H. Wines' *International Record*, February 1888, says: 'The food is most wholesome and substantial, consisting of mutton stews, baked pork and beans, vegetable soup, sauer-kraut, and ham; and on Sundays excellently baked beef-pie.' It is also remarked that, in the same prison, 'The men are allowed every weekly newspaper published,' and that 'musical instruments of every description, excepting the cornet and drum, are permitted, and every evening, from six to nine o'clock, the prisoners make the night hideous with their combinations of musical airs.' They also have a library of ten thousand volumes. This prison has 725

* Mr. W. Tallack's 'Penalogical and Preventive Principles.'

cells; but in 1888 the number of inmates was more than a thousand, so that some cells contained more than one inmate. The establishment is effectually guarded at night; for it is further added that 'twenty-three of the most tremendous Siberian blood-hounds and bull-dogs howl and snap out, night after night, their horrible cries of warning, as they run in and out between the blocks in their desperate search for human blood.'

If we ask whether this last system tends to the moral uplifting of the criminal classes, or to the benefit of the body corporate, I would say, Read the answer in the following paragraph:—

The Executive Committee of the National Prison Association of the United States, in their official report of the St. Louis Prison Congress, issued not longer ago than 1874, signed by Dr. E. C. Wines, as Secretary, used these remarkable and emphatic words:—

'If, by some supernatural process, our two thousand jails could be unroofed, and the scenes they conceal be thus instantly exposed to our view, a shriek would go up from this Congress and this country, that would not only reach every nook and corner of the land, but be heard, in Scripture phrase, "to the very ends of the earth"! There might, and would, be a few cheering spots, little oases scattered here and there, in the wide desert of obscenity, profanity, wretchedness, filth, enforced idleness, seething corruption, and dreary moral desolation, that would, at all points, meet the gaze and make every nerve quiver with horror.'

But let me here speak from my own experience of *American prisons*.

Visiting the Tombs prison of New York, I was amazed at the laxity of the discipline in the place. Cell after cell I visited contained a murderer: yet the walls were adorned with pictures—some rather questionable ones—and other things were permitted in them, which stood out in marked contrast to the severe rigour and order of a British gaol. Just previously to my going there, a woman had visited a man under sentence of death, and had taken him in his dinner; at the expiration of an hour the bell rang for all visitors to leave; some hours afterwards they discovered the woman in the cell of the murderer dressed in the man's clothes. He had escaped in her clothing.

On going over another of the large prisons of America,

I was struck with the ease with which an English thief would have made his escape from the place, and asked an officer whether many did not endeavour to escape. 'Well, yes,' he replied; 'a pretty good many do.' It is a remarkable fact that not 30 per cent. of those who are condemned to death in America are executed.

One of the largest of the convict prisons of America is the Sing Sing prison, situated on the left bank of the Hudson, thirty miles from New York, where perhaps there is more discipline than at an ordinary prison; but it is certain that convict life in America is a very different thing from such life in England.

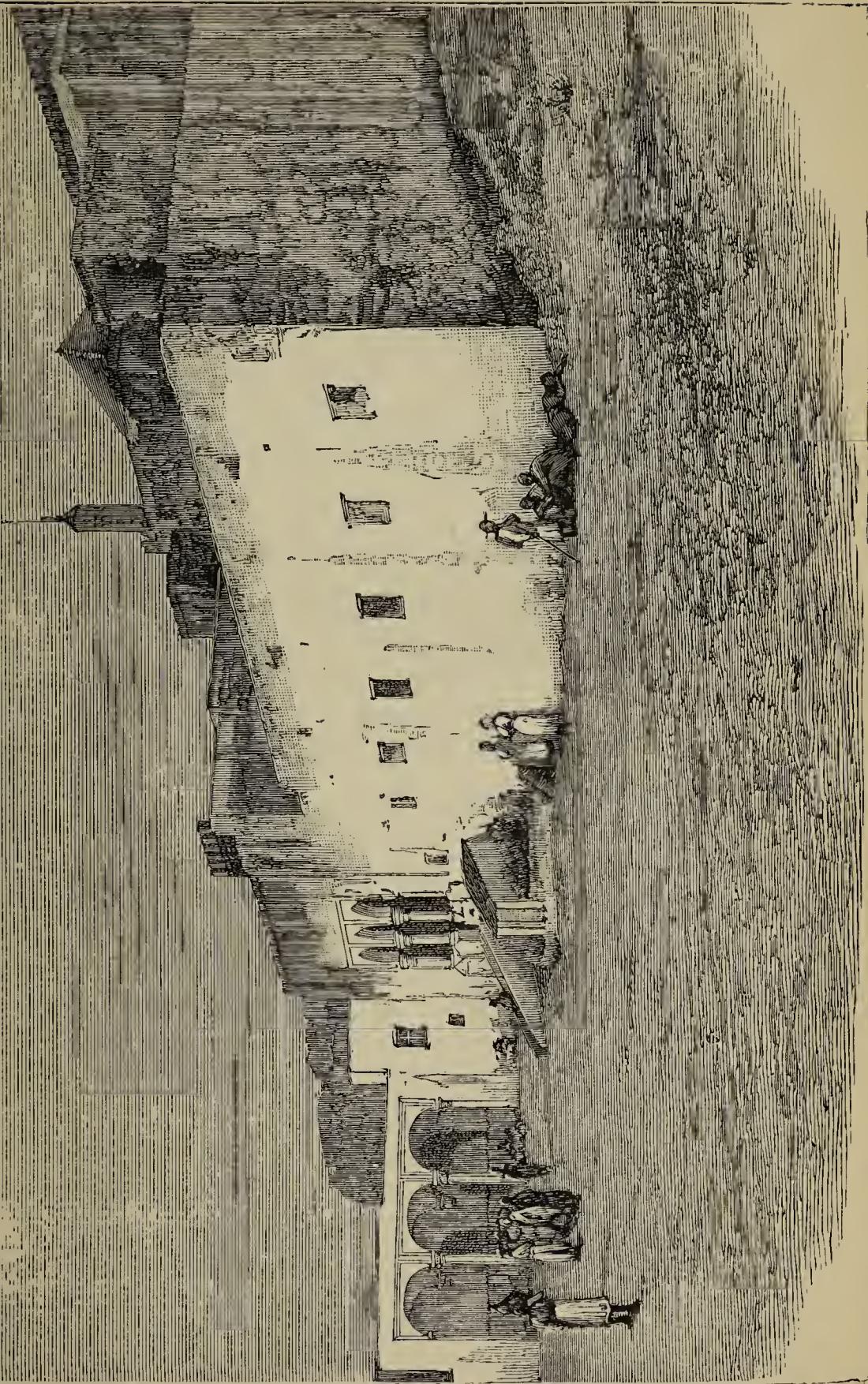
In striking contrast to the measure of comfort a prisoner may enjoy in the above country is the condition of the dungeons throughout the Empire of *Morocco*, within three days' sail of England. Yet one may see prisoners in chains, in misery and in want, without food or change of clothing, left to die of disease and starvation. The Sultan sometimes imprisons whole tribes at one time. Dr. Churcher, of the North Africa Mission, writing home to Mr. Spurgeon in February 1891, says, after speaking of the capital city, Fez:—

A ride of rather more than one day brought me to another city—*Mechenez*, containing between 60,000 and 100,000 souls. Here I stayed a couple of nights, to see what opening there was for missionaries. I was probably the only European in all the place while I was there, and now again it is left *without a solitary soul to speak a word for Jesus among all those thousands*. The day I was there I went about and made friends with the people. Among other places I visited was one of the prisons, in which many hundreds of men are confined, often on the most trivial pretext. The prisoners are herded together in a crowd, without any sanitation or conveniences of life, and almost without food. I looked through the iron grating at the little crowd of upturned faces which struggled to get nearest to it, and was particularly arrested by one oft-repeated cry, which seemed half-wail, half-shriek, as it called on some name to come and release the speaker. I found it was a prisoner whose reason had given way; and all day long he stands there crying out to one who hears him not, for deliverance which probably will never come. Sad picture this; but sadder still to think of all the nation in the prison of sin crying to dead Mohammed to deliver them.

I here present my readers with a view of the prison on the Kasbah, Tangier, with a short account of the citadel where the prison is built.

The Kasbah, or citadel, of Tangier is considered the most interesting quarter of the town. It is distinctly Moorish, no Nazarene being allowed to reside within its walls. Many of its buildings are very ancient, though it is difficult to fix any dates in this land, where even the children, when asked their age, will answer, 'Am I *God*, that I should know the number of my years?' The Sultan's palace and the Governor's residence are both in the Kasbah; there also are situated all the principal Government offices, the courts of justice (or rather of bribery and corruption), the treasury, the barracks for artillerymen, two twenty-ton guns, and the prisons. Most of these buildings are round a large open space, in which visitors to the Governor picket their horses. The Kasbah is full of strange contrasts,—the streets narrow and dirty; the prisons in semi-darkness, with an evil odour ever proceeding from them, and filled with prisoners chained, starved, and diseased. Yet the opening of a door in one of the windowless walls and a few steps down some winding passages lead into sunlight, beauty, and romance; for a palace of a past age is here, with neglected gardens and a lovely court, in the centre of which a fountain is playing in a marble basin, surrounded by marble Corinthian pillars, and rooms, with floor, wall, and ceiling displaying the finest specimens of Moorish art in tessellated work and wood-carving, the latter glittering with gold and soft colours, though the modern Moor delights in brilliant painting. The lace-like delicacy of the designs, both in wood and stucco, are indescribable. The date of one part of this palace can be ascertained from an inscription opposite the entrance, which fixes it as 1605 A.D., and the whole of it has fallen much into decay. There are two gates to the Kasbah. One, called Báb el Marshán, has a battery each side of it, and a pound for strayed animals under the archway; in the porch is kept

THE KASBAH, TANGIER.



a supply of biers belonging to the chief mosque. From the other gate, Báb el Asa (or stick-gate, so called from its being the place of public flogging of suspected persons in order to induce them to confess their guilt), a most beautiful view is obtained of Tangier; from no other point is it seen to such advantage.

As regards the *French* prison system, it is not equal to our own—much more severe in some respects than ours, and far less satisfactory, in that there is less of the reforming element in it. The leading official of Rouen Maison Centrale, who conducted me round, informed me that he only knew of one case of reformation in thirty years.

The cruelty of keeping a man in a dark cell for a whole month is apparent; whilst it almost amounts to murder to sentence a man to ten years' solitary confinement: yet France has been guilty of both of these acts, and I think attention should be drawn to the latter, as the maximum term a man can safely endure solitary confinement is nine months. I asked the above official what was the effect of keeping men so long in solitude. Patting his forehead, he replied, 'It drives them mad.'

Concerning the Paris prisons, after visiting them all, I thought them very far behind those of London. All work seemed to be done in association—no apparent classification of the prisoners; and the dormitories, workshops, and cells far from clean, and in many cases foul smells very apparent. As to those of her criminals whom she sends to the Southern Seas, I give a quotation from an English newspaper correspondent, who, writing from Paris, says:—

Intending criminals in this country can scarcely be frightened at the prospect of transportation across the seas, so long as facilities for escape from the penal settlements continue to exist. Only lately a batch of felons broke away from New Caledonia, in the South Pacific; next there was the escape of the young man Redon from Cayenne, in Guiana; and now it is announced that a hundred and fifty convicts have succeeded in surreptitiously leaving the same South American settlement. These men were attached to the

Penitentiary of St. John on the Maroni River, which flows between French and Dutch Guiana. As they were persons who had conducted themselves well while undergoing punishment in the interior of the settlement, they were not looked after very strictly in the Penitentiary ; and M. Franconie, the Deputy for Guiana, points out to-day that nothing is easier for the convicts than to cross the Maroni and enter a new country, where, if they are able to pierce through leagues of virgin forest, they may find employment or some means of returning home. Their great difficulty, however, is to get through the terrible 'bush,' and as numerous bodies have been found therein lately, all in a state of decomposition, it is supposed that many of the hundred and fifty fugitives succumbed to privations while endeavouring to reach the Dutch settlements. Convicts who are still serving their terms in the interior of French Guiana also make periodical efforts to fly from their terrible bondage ; but they, too, have vast tracts of forest to traverse even before arriving at a point where they could strike out for foreign territory. Sometimes these ill-fated fugitives have been known to eat one another while attempting to get away,—the strongest killed the weakest, but in the end had to succumb to hunger and hardship themselves ; nevertheless, escapes are still attempted, and some felons are successful in reaching their goal, the thrilling story of their adventures afterwards serving to imbue the minds of the members of the criminal classes at home with inadequate ideas as to the efficiency of transportation as a means of punishment.

I am again indebted to Mr. Tallack for the following evidence concerning France and her prisons :—

A strong condemnation of the French, but especially of the Parisian prisons, appeared in the *Revue Générale*, in 1885, written by M. Ives Guyot. He quoted the official statistics, as showing that the number of habitual criminals (*récidivistes*) in that country had alarmingly increased in the past thirty years. He attributed this largely to the effect of a degrading association of convicts, and to the comparative absence of measures to prevent discharged prisoners from relapsing into crime. He described in graphic colours the horrible crowding together of criminals, by day and night, in some of the Paris gaols ; young and old, the vilest and the most venial offenders being shut up, often in idleness and filth, and occasionally in darkness ; infecting each other with vermin, with disease, and with the worst moral corruptions. It was stated that spies are, at times, placed amongst these prisoners, and rewarded by the police for promoting their re-arrest.

The well-devised law of 1875, providing for the cellular separation of short-term offenders (imprisoned for periods up to one year in duration), has, for the most part, remained a dead letter. At

any rate it has only, as yet, been adopted in a comparatively few localities. And, in general, France has, as a nation, been too indifferent to the wise treatment of her criminals. Hence she has practically fostered their increase, as a viper brood, until her legislators, perplexed almost to despair, have devised no better means of relief than that of consigning their inveterately criminal population to distant Pacific Islands, either to rot, as in their own corruption, there, or, through frequent escapes and re-emigration, to plague the honest and law-abiding citizens of adjacent British colonies. Surely the intelligence of '*la Grande Nation*' ought to be able to attain a far better result than this, in reference to its neglected and criminal classes.

From what released prisoners have told me, I judge they think much less of 'doing time' in a French prison than an English one. 'You see,' one said to me, 'part of what I earn is put by for me when I leave, and I am also allowed to spend a portion on extra food and wine.' This was quite true, and I was at first very much surprised to see a continental prisoner whilst at exercise enjoying his cigar or pipe. This to an English convict would be almost Paradise; but no, 'We don't allow those luxuries here,' as a warder once said in answer to a young lady who was being conducted round an English prison, and who had asked him if the friends who came to see the prisoners were not allowed to kiss them.

Of *Belgium* the only complaint I have to make against the system is that no Bibles are supplied to the prisoners. Certainly the prisons here were scrupulously clean, the sanitary arrangements perfect, the ventilation without a fault—nay, the comfort such, that my respected friend, Mr. Thomas Clark, who has so often accompanied me in my prison journeys, as he sat down in an arm-chair in the infirmary exclaimed, 'Who would not be a prisoner?' The cellular system is in general operation in Belgium, which is reckoned to be more economical than punishment in association; but solitary confinement here is qualified by the fact that schoolmasters, chaplains, and warders were either constantly in the cell or visited the prisoners regularly, so that it could not be said to be complete isolation; and here I was informed good

behaviour brought such indulgences to the prisoners as tobacco and extra food. There seems to be in Belgium, however, no society or association for the assisting of discharged prisoners, which surely is a great mistake.

Of *Italy* I cannot speak so highly ; having been from north to south, from east to west, I am able to form some idea of the results of the system pursued by the authorities. I suppose Italy has more criminals in proportion than any other country. Every prison I visited was crowded, and the number of men under a 'life sentence' was alarming. When I was last in Italy the number of men who were imprisoned for life was nearly six thousand in the whole country.

As there is no capital punishment, this number is continually being added to, and it is not simply, as in some countries, twenty years, but it means for the natural term of the life of the prisoner. In some Italian gaols there are many hundreds of these men, and they are distinguished from other convicts by wearing a green cap. At Brindisi I saw a large number of them, and was pained to know that they had to work seven days a week.

On the Sunday that we were there the prison works were all in full swing. Poor fellows, no hope ! no Gospel ! no Christ ! Oh ! with what eagerness they accepted the Gospels we gave them, and how hearty were the prayers of our hearts as, sailing over the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea, we breathed the petition, 'Let the sighing of the prisoner come before Thee.' Many of the Italian gaols were very dirty,—notably those of Naples and Puzzuoli,—whilst those in Rome and out on the Campagna were in better order. Venice too had very filthy prisons, some of the cells used by the Inquisition being still utilised. They were damp and unhealthy, and utterly unfit for any human being to inhabit.

Holland at one time seemed to be behind the times, for many of her prisons, when I first visited them, were only large rooms, containing fifty or sixty men and boys, all herded together in much dirt and misery ; but now I

am glad to say things are better managed : the bread too which I saw was quite black, but that also has been improved.

There is a Dutch society of prison visitors who have done much good, acting as they have as unpaid chaplains, schoolmasters, etc. Prisoners were supplied with literature, not only of a healthy kind, but even decidedly spiritual ; and religious instruction to the prisoners is part of the prison system now carried on. No wonder good results were soon seen. Prisoners thus dealt with, by honorary workers who laboured for love to Christ, soon began to pray for themselves.

Austria in her system of prison discipline is much like Spain ; though after visiting both countries, I must say that the gaols of Austria are cleaner than those of Spain. Papal intolerance has hindered almost every one from seeking to bring about reforms in these two countries as regards their prisons.

Some of the prisons of *Spain* were very filthy, the stench from many of them being almost unbearable ; though I must admit, when the Spanish Government gave me my permit to visit the prisons, they asked me to report to them as to the condition I found them, and, if needed, to suggest any improvements I thought necessary. I need hardly say I called their attention to the great need of ventilation in those prisons which required it. On my return home from this journey, I had an attack of gaol-fever for ten weeks.

Poor dark Spain ! the land of immorality and bull-fights ; the only land where I suppose priests are publicly cartooned and caricatured weekly by the press, and where it is an open secret that the priests who offer up the Mass in the morning in Madrid may be seen at night, disguised by false whiskers, on the arms of the harlots who frequent the Plaza-de-Sol. No wonder the people are so foul when the priests are so false !

It was in Madrid where I experienced the only real opposition I have ever known in distributing the Word of

Author: Cook, Charles

Title: Prisons of the World

LOCATION

CALL NUMBER

STORAGE

365 MP

Staff use:



God in the many prisons I have visited. In a towering rage a priest withheld me, and threatened to burn every book I had given away ; but this, we told him, he 'dare not do ; it was God's Word, and he knew it, and he knew he must not do that.' Personally, I told him 'I had my authority from the Government, and he must find fault with them ; if I had done wrong, it was for them to blame me, not him, and he must complain to them.' This I knew he would not do, as they, the priests, were not in favour with the Ministry ; and thus we left him in a white heat of passion. It certainly was bearding the very devil in his den ; yet we were able to give the Word to many prisoners, and specially two Testaments to a young man and woman, who were to be tried for murder, and were also able to speak to both of them about their souls.

Of *Greece* the less said the better. We had lately come from Egypt, and thought nothing could be much worse than that,—the crowded dungeons, the lack of fresh air, and, excepting Cairo, no work,—but we were surprised to find Athens behind Egypt. Of the last-named country I believe much good was done by the late Mr. Clifford Lloyd, and is still being carried on by the Governor-General of Prisons, Dr. Cruikshank ; but the crowding and filth of Athens was beyond description, and the prisoners all in idleness. We thought of the past civilisation of Greece, and of the position Athens once occupied ; and as we gazed first on the Acropolis in all the grandeur of its ruins, and then on the miserable prison in all the squalor of its filth, one could not but think, 'Oh ! what a fall was there !' Shades of the departed ! is this the land of Homer and Demosthenes, of Pericles and Phidias ?

I went home from this visit tired in body and depressed in spirit, and rested not until I had delivered my soul in a very strong letter to the authorities, calling attention to the fearful and filthy condition of the prisons, and to the lack of accommodation for the sick and dying, there being no such thing as an hospital or infirmary.

Germany I am pleased to say stands high in the esti-

mation of many in regard to her prison system. In every cell a Bible is placed, no extreme measures are resorted to, and the men, though criminals, are treated humanely. I could not but notice that the warders seemed to be drawn from a better class of men than those in England, and appeared superior in education, and far more considerate in dealing with those under them than many that I have personally known in England. I distinctly remember on one occasion, when entering a workshop with the governor of the prison, that the gentleman raised his hat to the men at work as he wished them, 'GOOTEN MORGEN,' to which they all responded; and I noticed the pleased and even smiling expression on their faces as he entered, as though they were delighted to see him. This humanising spirit seemed to pervade the officers as well as the head of the place; and I feel sure if this kind of thing could take the place of the inflexible sternness characteristic of the English convict warder, the good results of such a system would soon be apparent, and we should hear less of attacks made on warders, and other outbreaks, caused, I verily believe, sometimes by the irritating, overbearing actions of some warders.

In *Wurtemberg* and *Bavaria*, where the systems are almost identical, I saw nothing to admire; there was nothing whatever calculated to reform a man. They shut the prisoner up for a certain time (like a caged wild beast), or put him in association with others perhaps worse than himself, and take particular care to withhold from him the Word of Life,—the entrance of which into his inner being would bring life and light and liberty, breaking the fetters of sin and the chains of wicked habits, and resulting, not only in the reformation, but the conversion of the criminal. Countries where Roman Catholicism holds sway do not supply their prisoners with God's Word; and it is only because enlightened governments are throwing off the thraldom of the Papacy, as regards national management, in most parts of the Continent, that I have been able or permitted to

so widely scatter in many professedly Roman Catholic countries the Word of Life which maketh free.

Hungary in the treatment of her criminal classes is less severe and strict, and no restraint was put upon us in visiting or speaking to, or distributing the Scriptures among them. Various nationalities of Eastern Europe were represented in the dungeons here, many of them unkempt, wild-looking creatures, men and women, differing in dress and language and complexion. But the sanitary rules and regulations were sadly defective, and dark and dismal were the dungeons in which large numbers were herded together.

No greater contrast can be imagined than that presented by the above prisons at *Buda-Pesth* as compared with the spick-and-span appearance of a model English gaol—the men in their neat (and not gaudy) dress, the railings of the many galleries as bright and clean as hands can make them, and the floors scrubbed regularly, until the cleanliness must be painful to some of the inmates; and we should much prefer a room to ourselves in one of her Majesty's hotels than to be in association with the poor creatures above.

Getting beyond Hungary in Eastern Europe, as far as regards prison life and treatment, is to pass almost beyond the ordinary ideas of civilisation; and when *Turkey* is reached there is 'much of a muchness' with all other Mohammedan countries in the slipshod way in which justice (or rather injustice) is meted out. The Koran may teach the Mussulman many good lessons concerning his treatment of his poor fallen brother, but unhappily he does not 'practise what he preaches.' If a bribe is offered or held out, your enemy is soon laid by the heels, and possibly may starve, unless some follower of Christ should visit and feed him. And then no wonder if Mustapha, when supplied with food and released from an unjust sentence through Christian influence, comparing the action of the one with the cruelty of his fellow-believer, entertains sceptical thoughts concerning the faith of

Mohammed. Filth and squalor and disease are identified with prison life in every country in which I have travelled where a follower of Mohammed is on the throne.

Our Colonies follow on the lines of the Mother Country, I am glad to say, with a little less of the severe, and a little more of the compassionate. This is specially true of *Australia*, where good rescue work is done by private individuals and others outside the authorities, and where other than official visitation has been permitted, and laymen have been greatly used in influencing men for good; for instance, Mr. J. F. Horsley, of the Prison Gate Mission, said at the Queensland Government Commission in 1887:—

There is a terrible antipathy to preachers and parsons amongst the criminal population. They will not listen to a man because he is a parson. Yet they are open to a layman's influence, if he will deal kindly and straightly with them. He also remarked: I look upon reclamation as being better carried out by personal influence than by preaching. I have been twenty years in the ministry; and since I gave it up, I have had more influence by personal intercourse than I had in doing pulpit work. For instance, Dr. Singleton, who has been a visitor in gaols for fifty-five years, is allowed to go through the prisons and talk to the prisoners, and his influence is marvellous. We want men to go to the gaols, not to hold service and go out again, but men who, without interfering with the prison discipline at all, can have conversation with the prisoners, with the confidence of the governor; so that they can go into the cells without the chaplain putting up his back about it.

God send the day when this may be permitted in England,—when accredited holy men of God may, 'the love of Christ constraining' them, be allowed to carry light and love and peace to many a dark soul and many a troubled breast in our prisons.

I have on another page supposed it possible that the gentleman who has the spiritual charge of all the prisoners, that is, the chaplain, may not himself be a man who enjoys the full assurance of salvation, may not himself consciously be a saved man. I would not for one moment write one word reflecting on such; a gentleman of this description may be painstaking, conscientious, and honourable, even

to a fault, but unless a burning and intense love for the souls of those to whom he ministers possess him, his work must prove a failure and he occupy a false position. I take it that the majority of my readers will not misunderstand me in thus writing. Next to my own vocation as an evangelist and pastor, I could wish no higher position than the chaplainship of a convict prison. Touching on this point, I add the testimony of one noted for his large-heartedness in the cause of the reclamation of prisoners : 'Whatever may be wished and done for prisoners, without the aid of religion, their reclamation is utterly chimerical. They must be saved by the religion of the heart—by a life in God. Religion throws its lucid beams on the three awful mysteries of birth, life, and death. But the dispenser of the light, whether he be clergyman, schoolmaster, or visitor, must be internally lighted and warmed himself. He who does his work from a cold feeling of official duty only, he who has not his heart and soul in it, will never become a friend to the prisoners. The prisoner feels that his words do not proceed from the heart.' On our present system of spiritually influencing our criminal classes for good I here give the testimony of Mr. Michael Davitt, who tells us, 'It is by no means the least of the many saddening reflections which a prison experience engenders, that religion in prison is in nine cases out of ten put on either for dishonest purposes, or assumed in the no less reprehensible game of hypocrisy.' And *I* believe *it is so*.

Of the cruelties and barbarities practised by the *Chinese* on their criminals I cannot speak here at any length : it would need a volume in itself,—of noses *sliced* off, of ears *cut* off, and hands *lopped* off, and of huge square wooden collars worn continually : all of which speak of the need of that country of the Gospel of Jesus to teach them how to deal with their fellow-sinners.

My journey also through *Canada* calls for no lengthy report ; it would only be a repetition on a smaller scale of what has been written of *England*—prisons clean and

well conducted on the whole, ventilation being perfect, and all the rules of sanitation carefully observed. This I believe is mainly true of all the Canadian prisons, though, indeed, I have heard of a terrible outbreak and mutiny in a prison at Montreal, the reason for which, however, I was unable to discover.

Of the prisons of *Scandinavia* there is much that might be profitably copied from their systems. The late King, Oscar I., was greatly interested himself in prison reform; he has written on the subject, and published a book entitled 'On Punishments and Prisons.' Speaking of prison visitation, his Majesty says: 'The solitary cell ought to be inaccessible to the outer world, but not to the admonishing and instructive voice of the philanthropist.' Norway has also been blessed with a number of good men, such as M. Richard Petersen, a most kind-hearted governor of a prison at Christiania, who has paid particular attention to the importance of making the cells in the prisons as airy and light as possible.

Add to this that great care is exercised in seeking to bring every prisoner under distinct spiritual teaching and influence, with the result that large numbers of those who are discharged do not lapse back, and are not seen in prison again; in fact, it seems in Norway and Sweden, as a friend once observed to me, 'The authorities feel that when a man is sent to prison he has been brought under their parental and spiritual jurisdiction, that by God's blessing he may be converted.'

In this, England may take a lesson, one of our weakest points being the great lack of bringing the Gospel to bear directly upon the heart and conscience of the criminals in the power and blessing of the Holy Spirit.

In *Denmark* also, while they possess such men as M. Stuckenbergh, the welfare of prisoners will be cared for and prison reforms carried on.

Miss Frere, the daughter of Sir Bartle Frere, speaking to me of the prisons at the *Cape*, told me that all classes and ages were mixed up, and that mere boys were

in association with criminals of the deepest dye, with most sad results. This surely calls for interference on the part of those in power.

Of the prisons of *South America* I cannot yet speak from experience, but what I gather from my friends who have travelled so far leads me to feel that there is much to be desired in the management and care of prisoners there ; yet this is only what we can expect in a land of revolutions, and where Spanish blood is prevalent and Spanish lives are lived.

Let me close this chapter by a brief word concerning the smallest prison I ever visited. I was staying at Stornoway Castle, in the Isle of Lewis,—an island perfumed with the name of the sainted mother of the present Lady Louisa Ashburton, my hostess at the time,—and hearing that I had made prisons my study, the authorities graciously undertook to show me round. It was built to hold six, but to my surprise every cell was vacant—not a single prisoner was there, nor had there been one for some time.

The reason given me by one of the sturdy Gaelic islanders—who, by-the-bye, are so religiously disposed that they even open their political meetings with prayer—was expressed in the words, ‘Aye weel ; ye ken we’ve na Roman Catholics in Lewis.’

As touching *Russia*, my travels in that country and its prison system will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER X.

DISCHARGED PRISONERS.

HABITUAL criminals are not easily influenced for good after their discharge. There have been some notable exceptions, but the majority go back to old scenes of dissipation and crime until they are again 'wanted,' or are caught red-handed 'lifting' something, or when attempting 'a burst' in the suburbs. But there is a large percentage—mainly those who are released after a first conviction, and some others—who are tired of the life, and would gladly work if it could be found for them; but *there is the rub*: who will trouble about them? who will trust them? Some have said, 'How can I go straight? I can't get a job; I've tried to do so till I'm tired,' and old companions tempt them back to the old ways, and they go to swell the number of 'old lags'; yet there was a time when they could have been won to honesty (and possibly to Christ), if some helping hand had been offered them.

I think, from my intercourse with convicts, and from what I gather from official sources, blended with my own knowledge of the matter, based on the experience of many years, that if I were asked what I thought of Prisoners' Aid Societies, I should be obliged to say, 'I think, in many cases, they do no good.' Convicts, as a rule, 'fight shy' of them, if they have had experience of them, and the 'new hand' is generally disappointed.

I have been told by those who were not interested in telling me a lie, and who gained nothing by the information they volunteered, that there is a lack of a warm, cheery,

'God-bless-you' sort of reception experienced by the ex-convict who puts himself under their care, the officials being distant and frigid in manner in all their dealings with their erring brethren. At the same time, all this class of criminals tell a different tale when they speak of one



particular Prisoners' Aid Society, viz., 'The St. Giles's Christian Mission,' Brooke Street, Holborn, the secretary of which is Mr. William Wheatley, of whom it is impossible to speak too highly for the work he has attempted and the good which he has done.

When first I knew Mr. Wheatley, he was wont to meet

the discharged prisoners outside the House of Correction, Clerkenwell, and I have had the pleasure of there labouring with him, and, after inviting all to come to breakfast in the Hall adjoining, have then preached the Gospel to them *after* breakfast. Many at those meetings gave evidence of a sincere desire to do better in the future, and have signed the temperance pledge before they left. But why is it that this particular 'Prisoners' Aid Society' has succeeded whilst others have failed? Is it not that it is essentially a *Christian* Aid Society, and that the Secretary is no mere official performing perfunctory work, but a man who is essentially a Christian,—a converted man, whose heart and soul are in his work, and whose work of faith and labour of love is rewarded when men are turned 'from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God'? This Mission now meets all prisoners discharged from each of the Metropolitan prisons, Holloway, Wandsworth, Millbank, and Pentonville. In proof of the good work done by Mr. Wheatley, I cull the following from the last report of the Mission.

'A friend supplies the following incident:—

'Taking some services a few Sundays ago in a country town, I told in the course of my address an incident from the Prisoners' Branch of the St. Giles's Christian Mission—that of a burglar saved by the grace of God. At the close a working man said,—

“May I speak to you a moment, sir?”

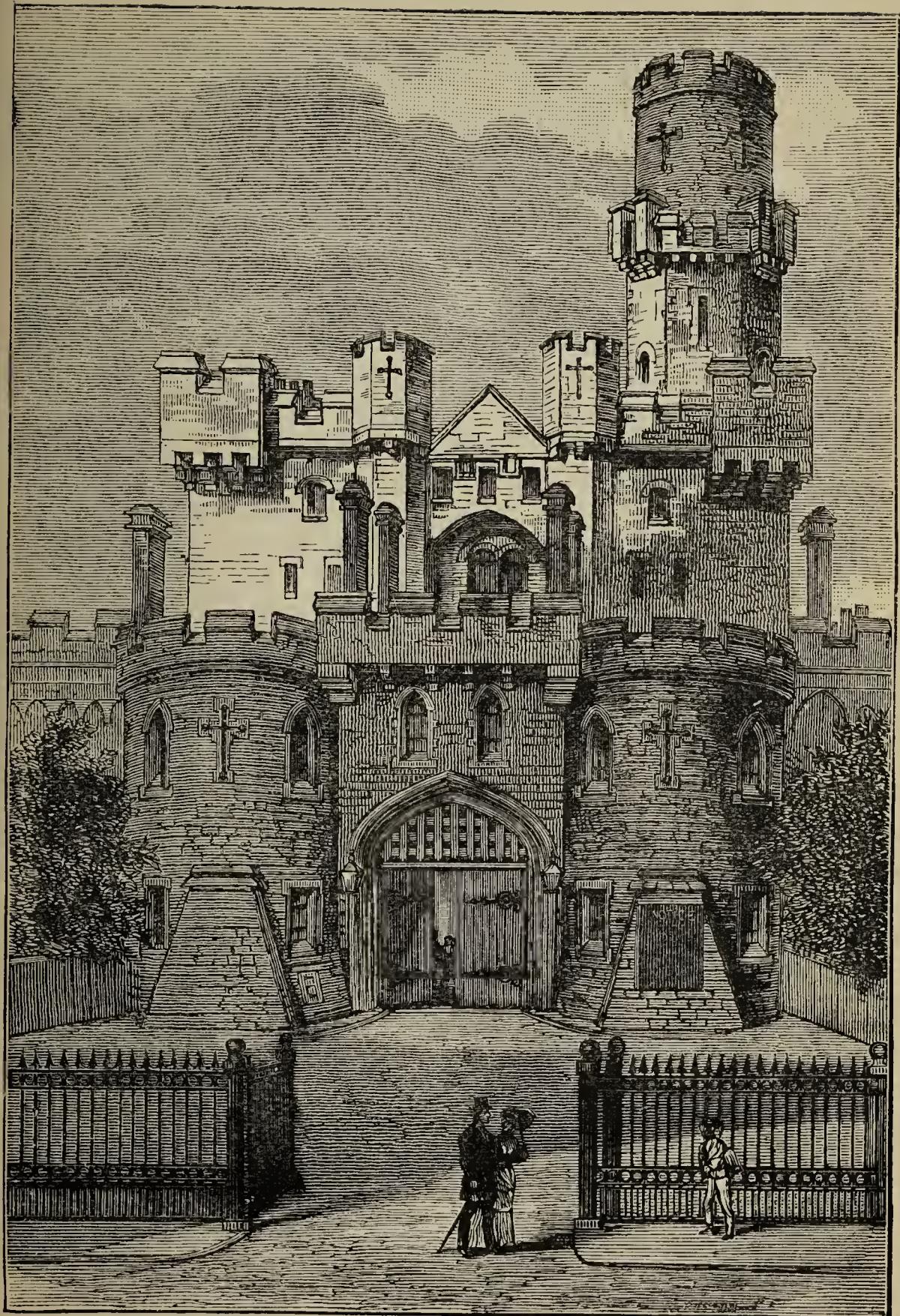
“Certainly; what do you wish?”

“Well, me and my missus heard you tell of that thief, and we thought we'd venture to ask if you knew aught of the Mission that does this?”

“Yes, I do; I know its work and many of the saved men; it is a grand work, I am sure.”

“It be, sir; here's me and the missis blessing God for that 'ere St. Giles's Christian Mission; for it saved our boy—it did.”

“How so?” said I, always on the look-out for anything good; “tell me about it.”



HOLLOWAY GAOL.

““ Why, this 'ere. He went to London, got wrong somehow ; we don't understand, for he was brought up rightly. He were, sir. Anyhow, six months after, we heard he were in prison. When he got out, missis went to see him, and he said he'd go straight. But he didn't, sir ; he got tempted again and was caught, and sent for a year to prison. We both went to meet him when he come out, and mother was crying like anything. Then, just as he come out, a gentleman spoke to him, and asked him to breakfast and to hear a bit of good advice ; and we said, 'Go, Dan,' and he did. They got him to give up the drink, and Mr. Wheatley got work for him ; and he's gone straight, and we believes he really loves the Lord now. So, you see, when you spoke about the Mission we thought we'd like to tell you that we bless God for that 'ere Mission, as saved our boy.”

‘A simple countryman's story, but told with a glowing heart ; and type of hundreds of such who are praising God for this glorious rescue work.’

At the Annual Meeting of the above Mission (1889), the following statement was made :—

‘Referring to the marked decrease in crime, it was stated at this meeting that the directors of convict prisons, in their report just issued, showed that the population of the convict prisons in July of the present year was 6405 ; this was less by 167 than last year's total, but in 1877 the numbers were 10,763, or 4458 more than they are at present.’

But despite the Societies and Associations which exist for the help of discharged prisoners, there is much room for individual help and sympathy. It is impossible for me to remember one-half the cases which have come under my notice of men for whom I have tried to find temporary work, so that I might be able to recommend them to regular employment.

On a certain occasion, at the close of one of my lectures at Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle, two men desired to see me. The title of the lecture—‘The Prisons of the World’—

had impressed them. Both of them were ex-prisoners, but what a difference: one ignorant and rough, the other cultured and refined; the one too bad for any Prisoners' Aid Society, the other *too good*—as he had never been convicted in England; the first hardly able to speak a dozen words intelligently, the other speaking several languages fluently, and speaking French with a true Parisian accent. I made an appointment at my house with them both. I then started the one in business twice, he failing in both. I then got for him a situation with a friend. The other I employed for some months, until he obtained more remunerative work. Here were two cases—and there are scores of similar ones—where only individual help can be of use. It is far better to find such men work than give them money. A few shillings invested in a box of bloaters or a barrow-load of vegetables, and the man feels 'set up,' and a natural pride will often push him on to success; hope cheers him, and faith in you, and the Master who has been prompting you, induces your 'gaol-bird' to attend the Sunday Services; the Lord does the rest; and thus work is done for time and eternity.

CHAPTER XI.

NEEDED REFORMS.

DR. BROWNING, R.N., who for many years laboured most successfully among the convicts under his care, and whose work among them is one of the most striking instances of the power of Christianity over prisoners, says:—

We hear much of various systems of prison discipline, as the Separate, the Silent, and the Congregate systems, but unless the CHRISTIAN system be brought to bear, with Divine power, on the understanding and consciences of criminals, every other system, professedly contemplating their reformation, must prove an utter failure. We willingly concede to various modes of prison discipline their just measure of importance, but to expect that human machinery, however perfect, can take the place of GOD'S OWN PRESCRIBED METHOD of reformation, involves not only ignorant presumption, but practical infidelity.

There is always a chaplain attached to each of our penal establishments, each of which may contain fifteen hundred convicts, and provided he who has to minister to such 'black sheep' be in love with his work, and the love of Christ constrain him, he himself being one who has been 'born again' and who has faith in the story of a Saviour's love to reach the hardest heart, then there is scope for real work; for we know the Gospel has reached and has saved the worst of sinners, and will still do so if preached in the power of the Holy Ghost; but even then, what is one man to do among so many, even if he be such a man as above? What is needed is, that

accredited godly laymen be allowed to visit among the prisoners in our English gaols after the working hours (5 P.M.); and that other clergymen be permitted to hold other services among them.

As proof of the influence of the above-named gentleman, whose habit it was every day to pray with and read to the convicts from the Scriptures, I append the following:—

One of his greatest triumphs was his voyage from Norfolk Island (of horrible history) to Tasmania, in charge of 346 'old hands.' A number of these had agreed to take a terrible revenge on some comrades who had been employed as constables over the others. But under the instruction and discipline of Dr. Browning, this purpose was entirely abandoned. (Murder was a common crime among the Norfolk Island convicts at that period.) The doctor landed his large party at their destination without having had a single punishment. He remarks: 'The men were given to me in double irons; I debarked them without an iron clanking among them. I am told this is the first and only instance of convicts removed from Norfolk Island having had their irons struck off during the voyage, and being landed totally unfettered. They are almost uniformly double-cross-ironed, and often chained down to the deck, everybody being afraid of them. I was among them at all hours, and the prison doors were never once shut during the day. To God be all the glory. Not a lash, nor an iron, was laid on any convict throughout the voyage. During a voyage in another ship, Dr. Browning proved that his decidedly religious, whilst practical and strict mode of treatment, was also successful in the management of female convicts, who are generally even more difficult to govern than the worst of men.'

From 'Penalogical and Preventive Principles,' by Mr. William Tallack, Secretary of the Howard Association, London, I extract the following, which is a passage in the life of the Rev. John Clay, where he describes his own observations of the impression sometimes produced by preaching the Gospel judiciously to criminals. He says:—

The preacher may speak of heaven; but those men cannot understand him. They know of no happiness beyond gross, foul, animal indulgence. The preacher may speak of hell; and they will wince. It would be terrible if true. But is it true? They harden themselves and won't believe it. But now let him preach Christ crucified; and mark the effect of his preaching, as, in vivid, strong words, he

tells the story of that Life and that Death, the story of that Friday morning at Calvary. Watch those men's faces, brutalised by years of selfishness and lust and gross ignorance. Gleams of intelligence and better feeling pass athwart their features. That strange, novel idea of *God having actually suffered, to save them from suffering*, astounds and bewilders them. Vaguely and dimly they begin to feel that they ought, they must, they will, love this Jesus, who has so loved them. They feel that they should like to do, to suffer, something to prove their love. The old self-love is shaken ; the new life from God is stirring within them ; and when those men go back to their cells they kneel down, and in their half-dumb, inarticulate fashion gasp out a prayer ('Life,' p. 203).

But what is the result if the chaplain be not a man who loves his work, and if it be *merely a living* to him ? if he have no experimental experience of the love of Christ himself ? if he be unable to offer a full, and free, and present salvation to all who will accept Christ as their Saviour *FROM sin* ? Or to speak still more plainly, if he be not a converted man himself, if he has not been born again, is he likely to meet the needs and necessities of these fifteen hundred immortal souls for whom Christ died,—and over many I verily believe He yearns with a longing desire to save,—but to whom no one save the chaplain has any right to speak on spiritual matters ?

Then, alas ! alas ! the results are beyond thinking about. A man undergoing a 'life sentence,' who evidently was feeling after God, speaking of his inability to find any comfort or help by what was preached from the prison pulpit, said to me, 'Ah, sir, I'm obliged to have a church in my own heart.'

There is need of reform here ; only let the Gospel be brought to bear upon our criminals, let visitors be allowed to visit them in their cells, and the simple Gospel be preached from our prison pulpits, and then, but not till then, may we expect to see a larger number really reformed. No doubt there are many of the most hardened villains in our gaols, whose object seems to me to contaminate those who are less revolting,—men who apparently are incorrigible ; but there are many who are there for

the first time, who by one act (often through drink) have exchanged a comfortable home for a convict cell, friends and relations for habitual criminals, and who have many hours of sad reflections (specially during the first nine months, which are spent in solitary confinement),—these, while their hearts are sad and their spirits drooping, are peculiarly susceptible of receiving the truth, and particularly so if a kind word is given them at the same time.

A young man who was converted while in prison says: 'I was placed in a dark cell, where no ray of light ever penetrated, without being informed how long I should be kept there—my offence which brought about this punishment was talking to a fellow-prisoner.

'The next day the chaplain came in, and I asked him, "How long shall I be kept here?" "Don't know," was the reply, and as he left the cell he said, "Ah, you'll be better after this,"—no exhortation to repent of my wickedness; no invitation to accept the Saviour; no, not even a kind word, nor a kindly tone in his language. Later on, the officer in charge of the dark cells brought me my bread and water, saying as he did so, "Here you are, Moore, cheer up." It was the first time I had heard my name for many a day, and the kindly tone in which he said it bred hope in the bosom of despair, and as "Old Brown" shut to the doors he little thought of the light he had left behind him in that dark cell; but it was the beginning of my turning to God. Fifteen years have passed away since then, and I do a little preaching myself; and if a little pathos is blended with "the terrors of the Lord," if there is mixed with the spirit of a "Boanerges" the consolations of a "Barnabas,"—the result being many conversions to God,—then it is because that prison-house was my Alma Mater and "Old Brown" my tutor.'

I have, ere I close on this point, to say that I know some of the chaplains of our gaols, and am thankful to God for them, their opportunities of usefulness being so many and so well utilised. One gentleman, who had just

been praying with a prisoner in his cell, said, in his presence, to me, 'Yes, W—— is glad he was ever sent here, are you not?' 'Yes, sir, I am,' was his answer, 'for it has been, through you, the means of my conversion.'

I am not at all inclined to believe what an ex-convict may say of our system, but as an impartial critic I think there is need of a more careful supervision of the warders and assistant-warders who are set over the prisoners.

In 1889 several questions were asked in the House of Commons, through the action of the Howard Association, concerning the death of a prisoner named Gatcliffe, in Strangeways Gaol, Manchester. At the inquest the surgeon said, 'The bruises and fractures must have been caused by the fist of some other person. The fracture of the breast-bone might have been caused by the pressure of the knee of some other person.'

The Home Secretary, in answer to Sir R. N. Fowler, said, 'One of the warders was tried for the manslaughter of this prisoner, and was acquitted.'

At a later date, March 14th, answering Mr. Labouchere, M.P., Mr. Matthews said he 'had made changes in the staff of the prison, which will prevent the possibility of any such occurrence happening again.'

Mr. William Tallack adds:—

The extraordinary fact now remains, that during the past year, in one of the principal English prisons, a poor misdemeanant has been literally *smashed to pieces*, whilst all the Prison Officials, Commissioners, Inspectors, Visiting Justices, Judge, and Home Secretary have been utterly unable to *bring home the act to any one person*. And, further, in its prolonged and ultimately successful endeavours to drag this important case before Parliament, the Howard Association was rather discouraged than otherwise.

Concerning the misuse of power by warders and assistant-warders, the remedy seems to be in the employment of a better class of men and the paying them a better wage. Their present position is liable to leave them open to bribery; in point of fact, it is an open secret that some of them have supplemented their salaries by this means,

and I do not think that what I have listened to from many convicts can be all untruth, specially as they had nothing to gain by deceiving me, as they were at liberty, were in work, and needed nothing, whilst some of them to this day are living consistent Christian lives.

I have never heard a complaint against a principal warder, and I feel sure if warders could be drawn from men in a higher social position and better paid, there would not then be the suspicion which there is now of prisoners being ill-treated.

This leads me to say that there is also a need of prison visitation by judicious persons, not connected with the official staff of the establishments. Some few persons have been so privileged ; but when a Secretary of State was addressed on the desirability of further encouragement to such volunteer visitation, he replied, 'We have the local magistrates, who are already authorised to visit prisons. These are sufficient ; or, if not, they ought to be so.'

Mr. William Tallack says :—

These words expressed the prevalent but fallacious idea, which has so strongly influenced the British official mind in regard to this subject. It is felt—and so far rightly—that the ranks of the magistracy contain so many gentlemen of special intelligence and sound judgment, that they would be competent to afford adequate assistance in supplementing the oversight of prisoners by the resident officers. But the accompanying fallacy consists in the virtual inference that because the magistracy have the needful power they all possess the *inclination* to avail themselves of their opportunities in this direction, and to the requisite extent.

Further, the actual conditions of magisterial visitation to prisons preclude many of the necessary results. A small committee of the magistrates, in every district, is set apart under the designation of 'VISITING JUSTICES' for each 'LOCAL GAOL.' Two or three of this body usually proceed to the prison about once a month. They remain there an hour or two on such occasions, ask a few questions of the officers and inmates, walk round the galleries, accost a few prisoners in their cells or at work, authorise the infliction of any special punishment (such as flogging) which may be awaiting their sanction, make a brief record of their visit, and then take leave of the establishment until the following month.

In general, scarcely any other visitation of the British 'local gaols' by the magistracy takes place. For although a large number

of gentlemen are, by reason of their holding this office, permitted access to the prisons, yet, as a matter of fact, they rarely avail themselves of the opportunity. For they feel a not altogether unreasonable hesitation to appear to interfere, in any degree, with the functions of the small body of 'Visiting Justices' specially designated and deputed as such. The writer, in visiting one of the county gaols not long ago, was informed, 'You are the first person, except the Visiting Justices, who has been allowed to go over this prison during the past two years.' This exemplifies the excessive and dangerous secrecy of British prison administration, even at the present day.

A brief visitation of the CONVICT prisons also takes place from time to time, by means of the unpaid 'Visitors' (two or three to each establishment) nominated by the Secretary of State, in accordance with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Penal Servitude Acts (1879).

It is of great importance to note that, in both classes of English prisons, therefore, the existing visitation, by authorised but semi-official persons from outside, is an Inspection, on behalf of the Government, with the almost exclusive object of affording a check against abuses in the management of their establishments. This class of visitors, whose services, as such, are certainly of decided value, can hardly be said to exercise, or apparently even to desire to exercise, the further important function of bringing moral and beneficial personal influences to bear upon the prisoners themselves. Their visits also can scarcely be termed voluntary, in the strictest sense of the word, inasmuch as their office imposes, or at least implies, a certain obligation to represent the Government. They are, indeed, *non-resident officers* of the prison, though with exceedingly limited powers; and, as such, they are rather *inspectors* than visitors. They do not appear to regard the moral elevation of the prisoners as specially, if at all, coming within the scope of their functions.

I recently visited a prison which was formerly known as 'the B—— County Gaol,' but which at the present time is used as a convict prison. I was surprised to find there was no governor, but in his place I found a 'chief-warder in charge,' and, as I understood, this was not the only case. I should like to point out the danger of this false economy: of course the salary of a governor is saved; but a chief warder is hardly likely to bring to light any fault, or to complain to the Commissioners of any person in the prison who is in the receipt of a higher salary than himself. That some such danger is likely to happen is

evidenced by the fact, that at one prison where there is no governor the chief clerk felt it to be incumbent upon him to write to headquarters, which was certainly most unfair to the clerk himself, necessitating as it did a reflection on his practically superior officer. Surely reform is needed here.

Many years ago certain parts of Portsmouth, Chatham, and Portland convict prisons were hastily run up as temporary corridors, the cells being constructed of corrugated iron, admirably fitted to enable the prisoners to correspond and talk to each other, and singularly adapted to bake the poor wretches in summer or freeze them in winter. Having myself been all through these corridors of cupboards,—for they are little else,—I can speak from authority. They are about seven feet long by four feet wide, and the strange thing is that they are still in existence and are used to-day. When I complained to one of the governors about them he said, 'They were only put up for a year or two'; but many years have passed, and I suppose for economy's sake they have never been rebuilt.

Other reforms than these are no doubt needed; for instance, a more thorough classification of prisoners, and an alteration in the scale of diet to prisoners under short sentences, when for the first month they get low diet, plank bed, and hard labour on the treadmill. If they deserve it, give them all these at different times; but to nearly half starve a man, and let him sleep on a plank bed, and give him the treadmill at the same time, is surely hardly the right thing.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

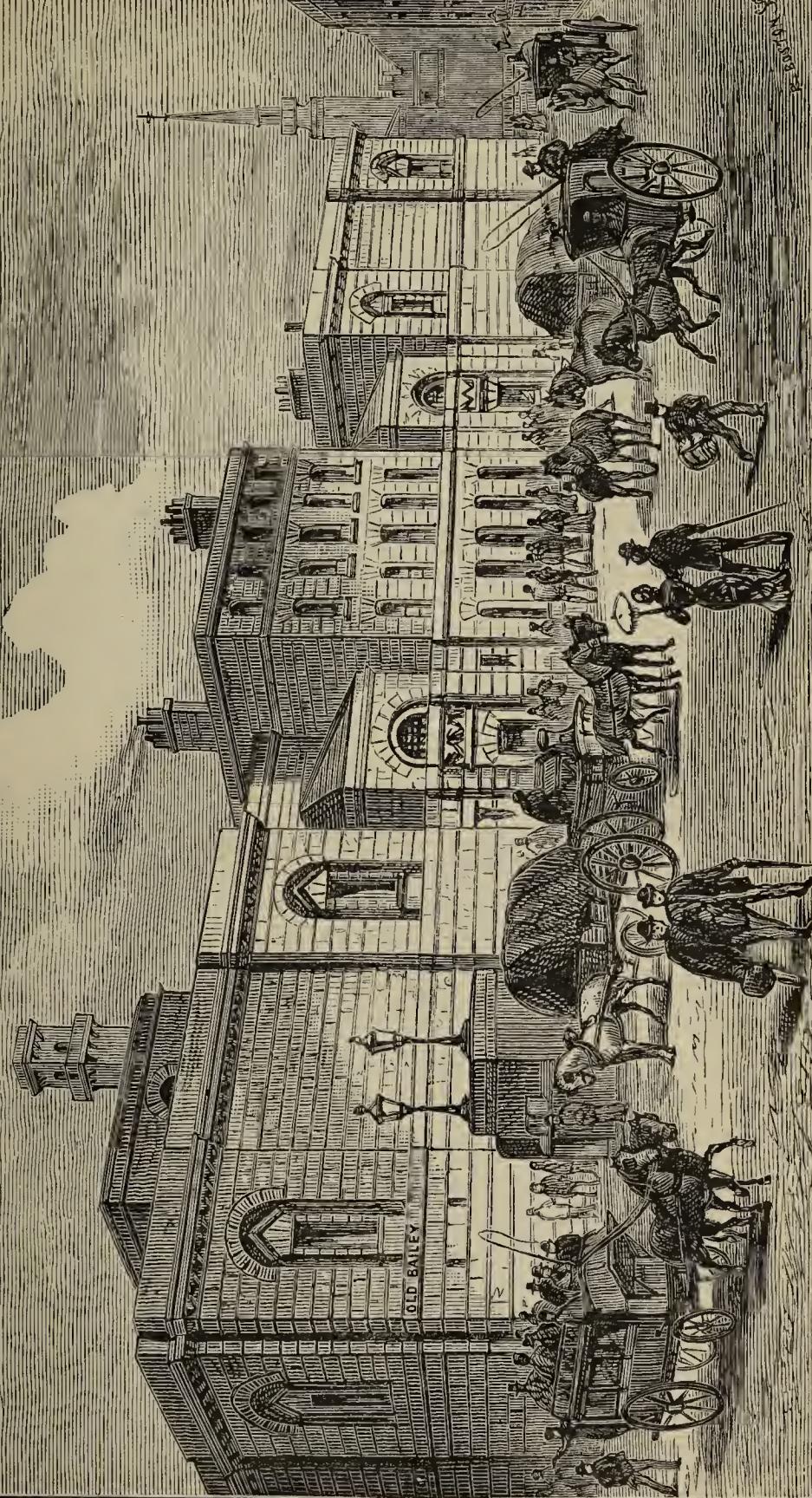
NEWGATE.

THROUGH the kindness and courtesy shown me by the Secretary of State, and the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Convict Prisons, in granting me permission to visit our prisons, I am able to make public what I saw and heard of the working of our present system, and I cannot do better perhaps than begin with historic *Newgate*.

Newgate ! what memories it recalls ! what scenes have been here enacted ! what sufferings have been endured ! and what sorrows have been experienced !

Newgate, which Stowe classifies as the fifth principal gate in the City wall, was first built about the reign of Henry I. or Stephen, and was a prison for persons of rank as early as the year 1218.

It was erected when, St. Paul's being rebuilt, the old wards, from Aldgate to Ludgate, were stopped up by enclosures and building materials. This gate of the City in time became old, and, needing repairs very badly, was pulled down and a new gate built ; hence the name NEWGATE. In the year 1218, the King wrote to the Sheriffs of London, 'commanding them to repair the gaol at Newgate, for the safe keeping of his prisoners, promising



NEWGATE.

that the charges laid out should be allowed them upon their accompt in the Exchequer.' It was rebuilt two centuries later by the executors of Sir R. Whittington, whose statue with a cat stood in a niche until the time of the Great Fire of 1666. The gate was repaired in 1630-3, destroyed in the Great Fire, and rebuilt in a stronger and more convenient way. On the east or City side of the old prison were three stone statues, Justice, Mercy, and Truth; and four on the west, or Holborn side, Liberty, Peace, Plenty, and Concord. Four of these figures, which survived the Gordon Riots, ornament part of the front of the present prison. The prison, having just been rebuilt, was burnt by the rioters (headed by Lord George Gordon) in 1780; they had previously broken open the Fleet Prison, and the King's Bench, and the Marshalsea, and Wood Street Compter, and Clerkenwell Bridewell, and released all the prisoners: all the rioters wore a badge of blue ribbon.

But to come back from the past to the present. I presented myself at the well-known door in the Old Bailey one morning, and was at once admitted inside Newgate. I found quite a modern model prison inside the old prison. The inner prison is a marked contrast to the old one, the latter consisting of very thick stone walls, very low passages and corridors, and long, large rooms—not used now we have the separate system, but which were used when Howard, the prison philanthropist, visited here, and of which he says: 'I scruple not to affirm that half the robberies committed in and around London are planned in the prison by that dreadful assemblage of criminals, and the number of idle persons who visit them.' Even in 1836 the Inspector of Prisons found fault with the system within the prison. The prisoners were allowed to amuse themselves with gambling, card-playing, and draughts. Sometimes they obtained, by stealth, says a writer in Knight's 'London,' the luxury of tobacco and a newspaper; sometimes they could get drunk. So much for the old system of 'association.' Here, in new or

modern Newgate, all is different. The slang term for this prison used to be the 'Stone Jug': it now is the 'Gate,' just as the 'Bank' is Millbank.

Introduced to the chief warden and a lady and gentleman who were seeing the prison previous to its being no longer used as a gaol, he took us into a small room, where we saw plaster casts of the heads of all the notorious criminals who had been executed both within and outside the prison for the past century.

There are points in the histories of many of these criminals which are very suggestive and illustrative of eternal things. For example, Martha Browning, in 1846, murdered her mistress to obtain a £5 note which she had seen in her possession; but when she got it, it proved to be but a counterfeit. How many risk their souls' salvation for something in the world which, after all, proves but a delusion and a snare! Truly, 'What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' Then, again, Bishop and Williams were executed for killing persons for the sake of their bodies, which were sold for anatomical purposes; their last victim was a poor Italian boy, whom they drowned in a well, head downwards, to give the idea that he died a natural death; but water was found in the lungs, and they were brought to justice. 'Be sure your sin will find you out' was brought to our minds very forcibly by this incident. A third man was also condemned with these two, and the gallows was made ready for the three, when a reprieve came for him at the last moment: saved, like the dying thief, just in time.

In the same room are exhibited irons of all descriptions, ancient and modern, for the arms, legs, and waists of the prisoners, some of the leg-irons weighing nearly forty pounds. The identical irons made for Jack Sheppard were shown us, out of which he disentangled himself and escaped twice. A massive axe made to decapitate the Cato Street Conspirators, who were ordered to be 'hanged, drawn, and quartered,' we also saw; and it may surprise many to hear

that, as the law of England still stands, a person guilty of high treason may be thus treated.

'I have seen twenty-two men and one woman hanged in that strap,' said our courteous guide, showing us the belt with which the criminals were pinioned.

Leading the way through the old prison, the walls of which are two feet thick, the warder conducted us into quite a modern prison within the old one.

Entering the chapel, we noticed a slab over the pulpit, on which was written the words, 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God' (2 Cor. v. 20). A black chair is set apart under the pulpit for the use of the condemned man, who thus listens on the Sunday previous to his execution to his own funeral sermon. What an incentive for the preacher, to know that one was listening for the last time! May we ever preach as 'a dying man to dying men!'

Very solemn were the thoughts which filled our minds as we saw the place of execution. Judgment was the prominent thought; oh that, in these days of open sin and flaunting vice, men could be led to see that as judgment overtakes the breaker of his country's laws, so inevitably will it also overtake those who transgress against the commands of God! If it is solemn to think of the sentence of an earthly tribunal, how much more so is the thought of that Great Assize where God will 'judge the secrets of all men.' He has 'appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained.'

Now traversing some long, low, arched corridors, we came out into a hall with glass rooms on our right, which were the consulting rooms used by the solicitors when receiving instructions from their clients, the officials being able to see everything; but so well has the possibility of sound escaping been provided against, that any prisoner could reveal the most important secret to his legal adviser without fear of any other ear catching the faintest whisper.

I had occasion to visit Newgate a short time since, to see one whom I had known for many years, and who, I understood, was waiting his trial at the Old Bailey. Iron bars separated me from him, and, to my surprise, I was told he had just been tried and sentenced to five years' penal servitude. It was his first offence; drink was the cause, and by reason of the trial coming on unexpectedly, and no one being called to speak as to character, he received what I deem a hard sentence.

The lady with us asked our guide whether they 'ever had any one escape from Newgate?' 'Well, we have no account of any,' replied he. I think I am right in saying the first memorable escape from Newgate was that of Jack Sheppard in 1724; and in the following year, on the 15th of February, Jonathan Wild, the great thief-taker, was charged with having assisted a criminal in his escape; he was tried at the Old Bailey on the 15th of May, and executed at Tyburn (very close to where now stands the Marble Arch) on the 24th of May, 1725.

The kitchen of the prison we then saw, which for cleanliness was all that could be desired. At every prison I have tasted the actual food supplied to prisoners, and excepting that the tea supplied to the convicts was hardly strong enough to please me, I was surprised at the quality of the food, the brown bread being far better than we often get in the 'outside world.'

It was formerly the practice for the clerk or bellman of St. Sepulchre's to go to Newgate on the night preceding the execution of a criminal, ring his bell, and repeat the following wholesome advice:—

All you that in the condemned hold do lie,
Prepare you, for to-morrow you shall die;
Watch all, and pray; the hour is drawing near,
That you before the Almighty must appear:—
Examine well yourselves, in time repent,
That you may not to eternal flames be sent;
And when St. Sepulchre's bell to-morrow tolls,
The Lord above have mercy on your souls!

Past twelve o'clock!

Entering the cell in which are confined prisoners sentenced to death, we were surprised to find it so large an apartment. This is accounted for by the fact of two warders sleeping in the same cell as the condemned man.

We were very much struck with the text which hangs over the bed on which the prisoner under sentence of death sleeps; it reads, 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord.' Words easily read, but, with murder on the soul, not so easily obeyed. Two other very suitable texts adorned the walls, viz., 'Hope thou in God,' and 'God is love.' They were the gift of a lady in Norwich.

The front of Newgate continued to be the place of execution in London from 1783 to 1868, and our guide told us of the many scenes he had witnessed in connection with public executions in front of the Old Bailey, his experience ranging back nearly twenty-five years. Silas Told, a Wesleyan minister, speaking of his visiting condemned men in Newgate in 1744, says: 'On being called out to have their irons knocked off, Lancaster looked toward heaven and smiled, saying, 'Glory be to God for the first moment of my entrance into this place! For before I came hither my heart was as hard as my cell wall, and my soul was as black as hell. But, oh, I am now washed from all my sins, and by one o'clock shall be with Christ in Paradise!' He then exhorted the innumerable spectators to flee from the wrath to come. Among the many guilty and unhappy criminals who have sat in the condemned cell at Newgate, and counted the moments that lay between them and death, one of the most unhappy must have been that once popular preacher, Dr. Dodd, who was hanged for forgery in 1777. The friends of Dodd were zealous to the last. Dr. Johnson told Boswell that £1000 were ready for any gaoler who would let him escape; a wax image of him had also been made to be left in his bed; but the scheme, somehow or other, miscarried. A very much smaller sum would have procured his release if it had been in America, for an

official in Blackwell's Island Prison, New York, said to me, 'Well, if you have just got money, we can get you off the gallows.' In 1820 the condemned cells were full of the Cato Street conspirators, with Thistlewood, their leader; they were executed in front of the gaol. The hangman's man cut off the head of Thistlewood, and, holding it up by the hair, exclaimed, three times, 'This is the head of Arthur Thistlewood the traitor.' Greenacre was hanged here also in 1837, and Courvoisier, a Swiss valet, in 1840, for the murder of his master, Lord William Russell.

From the condemned' cell to the yard where the permanent gallows ... erected was a walk of a few moments only. It stands in the right-hand corner of the yard, and is a large shelving shed with two large doors which throw back, and is not unlike a large saw-pit, with a stout upright post at either end, a cross-beam running the whole length. The poor unhappy wretch would stand upon two hinged flaps, which meet in the centre, and are bolted; and when the pinioned criminal had had the noose adjusted by the executioner round his neck, the hangman had but to move a lever (exactly like a pointsman's brake), the bolts are released, the hinged doors part in the centre and fall each to their respective sides, and the soul is launched into eternity.

Returning back through 'Birdcage Walk,'—the slang term used by Newgate prisoners for the place where the bodies of those executed are buried,—the chief warden pointed out on the wall a number of initials, which he told us represented the murderers who were there buried. 'For instance,' said he, 'this M stands for Muller, these five letters for the "Flowery Land" pirates, this G for Greenacre, and this C for Courvoisier. We occasionally give the wall a whitewash over, which gradually helps to fill up the letters cut out, and so makes room for others. See,' he added, 'another coat and this C will be quite gone.' It is part of the sentence that a murderer shall be buried within the precincts of the gaol where he was executed:

the body is put into a rough shell, filled up with quicklime, and buried directly.

Whilst escorting some Americans round the prison, a young lady of the party asked our friend what the meaning was of the word 'Silence' being so prominently put up in several places in the prison. 'No prisoner is allowed to talk,' said our guide. 'You don't just think you'd be able to keep me quiet, do you?' asked the young lady. 'Well, we should try,' replied our friend. 'Then I guess you would never do it.' Presently, coming to the punishment cells, from which all light and sound are excluded by double doors, they were asked to go inside. They did so; the doors were shut, the keys turned, and they left there for two minutes; the first to reappear in the corridor was the lady in question, who at once said, 'Well, Mr. Warder, I've just come to your terms.' This reminds one of the worthy magistrate who thought he would like to try for a moment or two what the treadmill was like, but who was no sooner accommodated with a place on the 'getting upstairs' than he said, 'Stop it, stop it—that will do, thank you,' and who was horrified at hearing the official reply, 'Very sorry, sir, but it is set for twenty minutes.' I am not responsible for this last incident, nor am I able to say at what prison it occurred, as I was not present when it happened. *I should have very much liked to have been.*

Newgate is no longer used as a prison, but when the Old Bailey Sessions are proceeding, the prisoners are brought here and located during the trials.

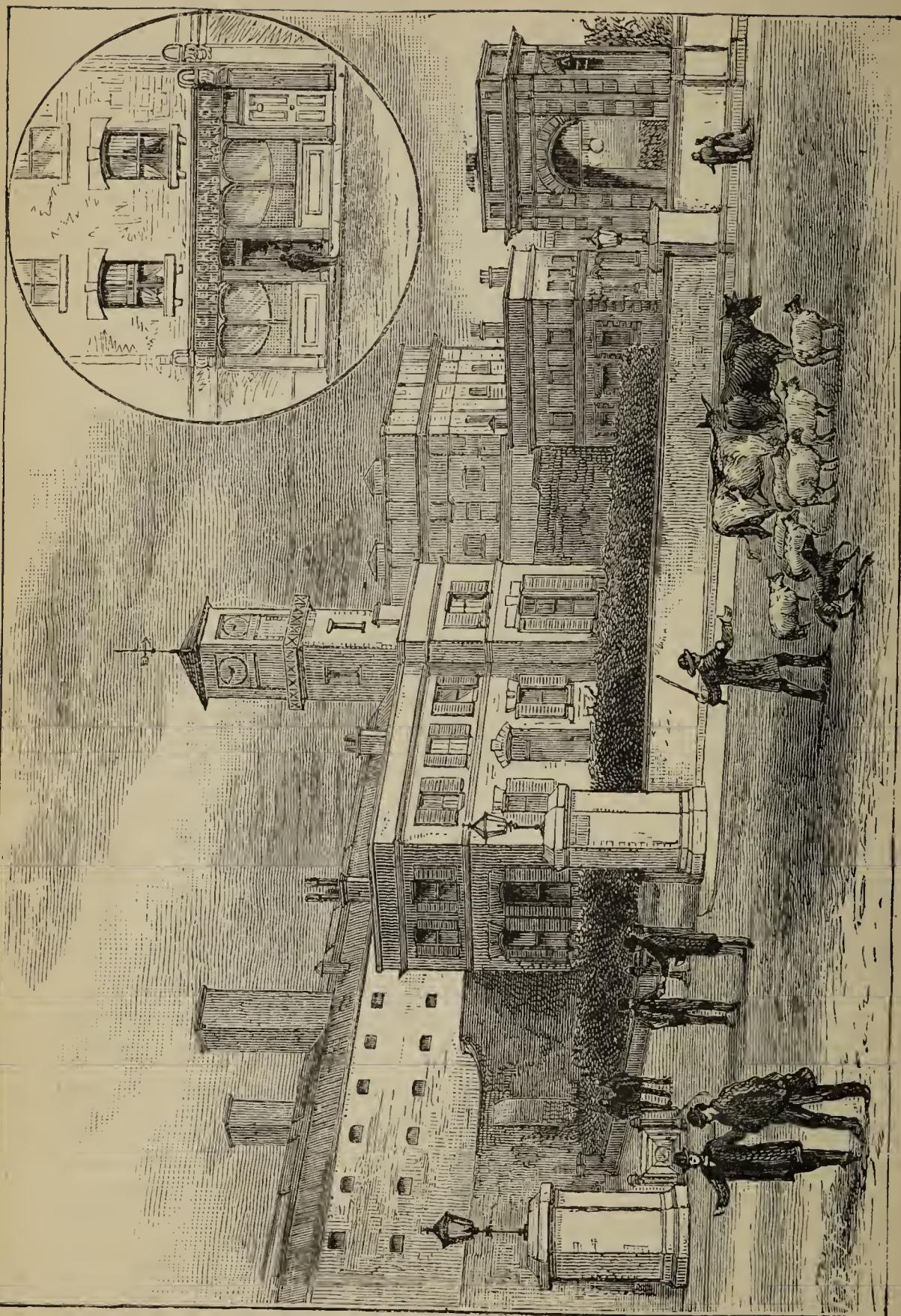
CHAPTER II.

OTHER PRISONS—CONVICT AND LOCAL GAOLS.

PENTONVILLE received its present name from Mr. Henry Penton, M.P. for Winchester, who died in 1812, and on whose estate the first buildings in Penton Street were erected in 1773.

Pentonville Prison was the result of a Government Commission sent to America in 1832, to inquire into the system of isolation so much belauded on the other side of the Atlantic. A model prison on this plan was resolved upon. Major Webb was set to prepare a scheme of details. The first stone was laid on the 10th of April, 1840, and the works were completed in the autumn of 1849, at a cost of £90,000. The building so erected consisted of five wings, or galleries, radiating from a point, the view from which is very striking ; but since that the wings have been considerably lengthened and the whole prison greatly enlarged. When first built there were only 520 cells ; it now accommodates 1100.

About six weeks after my visit to Newgate, I went for the second time to see over Her Majesty's Convict Prison, Pentonville. Escorted by a principal warden, we went through the whole of this huge prison, where the majority of our convicts serve their first nine months. Entering the cells we found the men at work, some tailoring, others mat-making, and others weaving. In another separate part of the prison were a number of men 'in association' making boots and clothes for the Metropolitan Police ; but these were convicts who were serving out



PENTONVILLE.

their time here, instead of being sent on to the Public Works. All the prisoners are allowed some time for exercise, and as a number of convicts passed us on their way to the yard we followed them, and the truthfulness of Frith's picture 'Retribution,' once exhibited at the Royal Academy, was apparent; it was from one of the yards in this prison that he so faithfully portrayed the wonderful scene. Most of the prisoners were walking round a large circle, the aged and the infirm in a smaller circle within the other, the cripples—some two or three—being by themselves, slowly moving up and down one side of the yard. Each convict carries his sentence on his right arm, say the figures 15 for fifteen years, beneath this his registered number, let us suppose 1049; under this again there is a letter, perhaps two, possibly three, or even more. If there were two, say I and y, the first a capital, and the second a small letter, they would prove that the convict was sentenced in 1882, and also that he received a previous sentence in 1872, each year being known by a particular letter; so that it is possible to tell in a moment, by looking at a convict's arm, how long his sentence is, how long he has served, and how many times he has been convicted—at least, so far as the authorities know.

Some idea of the number of years to which the convicts in Pentonville have been sentenced may be gathered from the fact that, by the lowest computation, the aggregate must be considerably over 6000 years—more years than have elapsed since Adam was created; and this is only one out of many prisons. This prison is beautifully lighted and ventilated, and comfortably warmed, and is divided into five divisions, A, B, C, D, and E respectively. The food, as examined by myself, which is supplied to the prisoners, was all that could be desired by the most fastidious. The chapel is large and commodious, holding over a thousand, and I was credibly informed the choir was good. Pentonville is now no longer used as a convict prison, and is simply a local gaol.

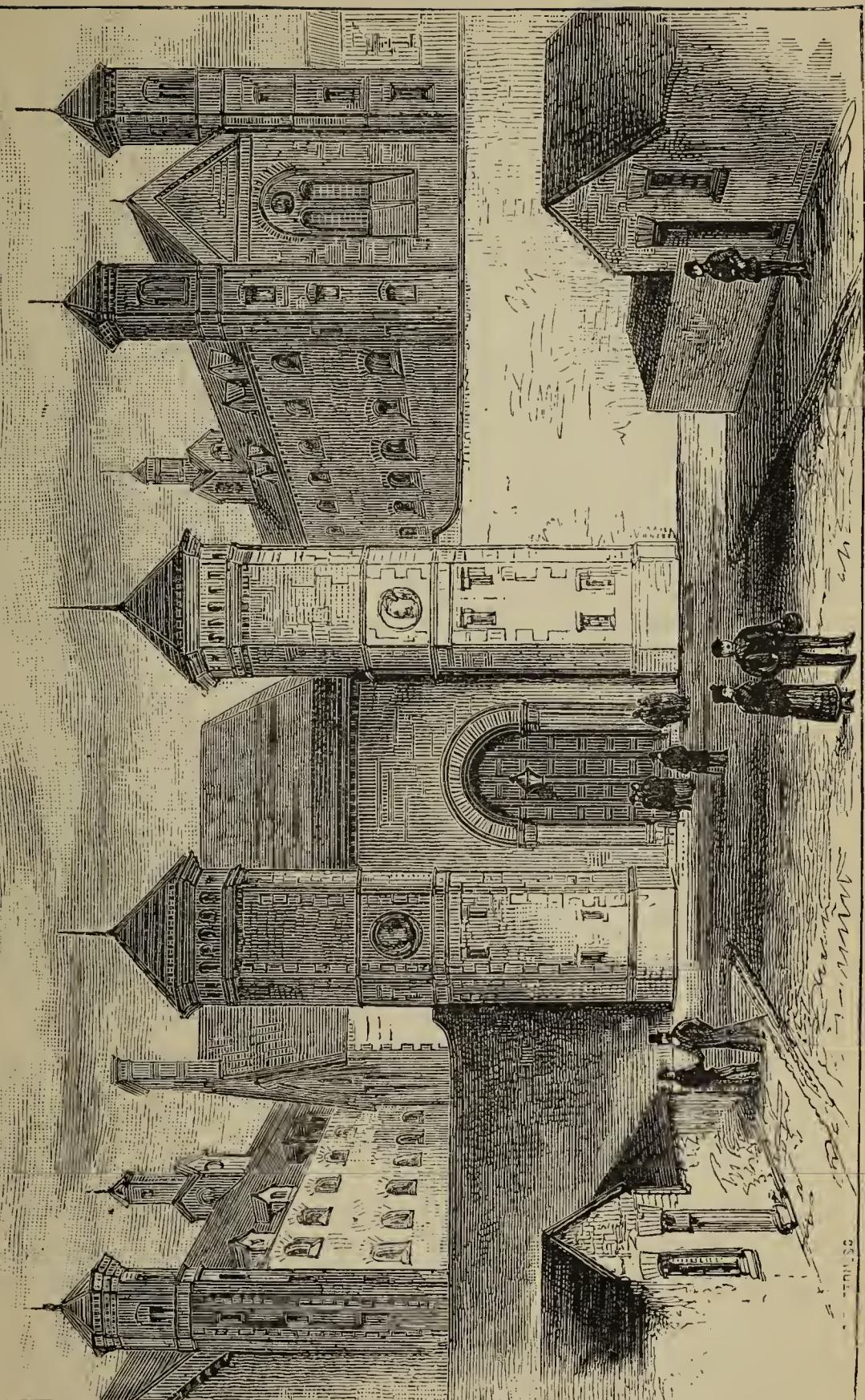
Wormwood Scrubbs is a new prison on a new principle, being built in separate wings ; the first wing being built by men who slept on the spot in small iron huts until the first part of the prison was built, some twelve or thirteen years ago. Officers' quarters and an infirmary have since been added.

When I first visited this prison the outer wall was not then completed ; the prison, therefore, was surrounded by a high wooden paling, which also enclosed the large field where brickmaking on an extensive scale was going on. The civil guard were mounted in small wooden huts all round the enclosure, with loaded guns. Some time before a convict escaped over the palings. He was shot at several times, but not hit ; but was eventually recaptured and brought back, henceforth to be dressed in the 'canary' suit, which consists of a parti-coloured dress of yellow and light brown.

The chief warden told me that the length of the wings and the height of the building correspond with the size of our troop-ships—about 400 feet. 'Do you know,' he asked, 'what this prison puts me in mind of?' I said, 'No.' 'Well, looking at the railings, and the galleries, and all the iron-work, it always reminds me of an aviary.' 'If that be so,' said I, 'then you must have a rare collection of *black-birds*.'

It being my turn then to ask a question, I inquired whether he knew why a thief is called a gaol-bird ? And as he could not give me an answer, I replied, 'Because he's been a robin.'

At the present moment the prisoners comprise over 1000 males and 210 females, undergoing sentences varying from three days' ordinary imprisonment to penal servitude for life. *Wormwood Scrubbs* is the most modern English prison, having just been completed from the designs of Major-General Sir Edmund Du Cane, Surveyor-General of Prisons. It was constructed entirely by convict labour, and contains about 1400 separate cells, in blocks of 350 cells, the blocks being parallel to one



another and running north and south, the space between them being occupied by kitchen, laundry, workshops, etc. The Protestant chapel is a handsome building of stone, quarried by convicts at Portland.

Coming out of the prison, we walked into the fields, where the men were at work, some ten or twelve being in the care of each officer. It is impossible to keep them from talking ; they are supposed not to talk, but they do so, and the warders know it. Without a movement of the mouth or throat, an 'old lag' will talk as distinctly as possible, and it is impossible to know which of the party is talking.

Several cases of assaults on warders have taken place here : the worst was that of a warder being thrown from the top gallery down to the bottom. Another case was of one being struck with an iron tool. Offences inside a prison are usually dealt with by the prison officials. In this case the man was brought out and tried, and sentenced to a further term of five years.

This gaol also has recently ceased to be a residence for convicts, and Wormwood Scrubbs now takes the place of Coldbath Fields as a prison for short sentences.

Parkhurst Convict Prison is in the Isle of Wight, and is used as a convalescent prison for old and infirm prisoners, and for cripples. The governor conducted me over the two separate prisons, where the poor hoary-headed criminals were passing the time away doing such work only as they were able to, principally making and mending stockings. The place seemed to have a very homely appearance, the governor almost kindly to a fault. It is quite an invalid prison, and there seemed to be less of the iron inflexible discipline which one sees so rigidly carried out in all English convict settlements, and I was pleased to hear one or two of the men called by their Christian names. Several noted criminals are here living out their last few years—some who once occupied a high and honourable position in the outside world.

At Portsmouth Convict Prison I found some notable

prisoners. Having been shown over the prison, I was conducted to the Public Works by the chief warder, and almost the first convict I saw was the Claimant—not quite so stout as he used to appear, but looking very well ; he was engaged in sawing up wood. Mr. George said that Mr. Kimber, secretary of the Criminal Law Reform Association, had stated, when he was at the prison last, that 'that man had cost the country nearly £92,000.'

Here the penal cells were almost full of refractory prisoners, who had broken the prison rules, whilst the number of men in irons was something distressing : in every part of the works were men in irons digging, or shovelling, or wheeling barrows. In these irons they sleep and bathe and work. They are riveted on, and are never taken off until they have been worn for the time the convict has been sentenced to wear them. Prisoners are usually sentenced to wear irons through assaults on officers. Mr. George, speaking of one desperate villain in the cells, said, 'He nearly killed one man recently, and I believe he will either kill himself or somebody else before he has finished his sentence.' Another said to the chief warder when he had been handcuffed, 'Take these things away or I shall break them.' He did, and a second pair also.

In this prison I found many men under a life sentence, and on inquiry found it was invariably through drink. I could tell of several sorrowful cases, but one here will suffice. Going into the infirmary the warder said to the prisoner acting as cook, 'Tell this gentleman how many times you have been reported since you have been here.'

'Not once, sir.'

'How long have you served ?' I asked.

'Twenty years,' he replied.

'What is your sentence ?'

'For life.'

'Was it through drink ?'

'Yes, sir. I was a soldier in India and taken out to a party and made drunk. I came home, and had a row with

a comrade, who stabbed me, and I in return stabbed him. I recovered, he died. I was court-martialled and sentenced to penal servitude for life.'

After some further conversation with him, I gave my card to the chief warden and wished the prisoner good-bye. In two months from that he was out of prison and in my employ. He has since been recommended to a better position, has married, and is doing well.

Surely this one case repays for all the miles travelled, the money spent, and the pains taken in inspecting our prisons and visiting their inmates.

There are many persons who think that habitual criminals are beyond all hope of reformation; there are others of us who think that the Gospel of Christ, if it can be brought to bear upon them, can bring about their conversion, which is far better. The last visit of Messrs. Moody and Sankey produced a revival in Chatham which was even felt within the walls of the convict prison there. Special services were held in the prison chapel for a fortnight, a different preacher being appointed each day.

I am enabled to speak with some authority on the causes which bring so many within the walls of these places. There is no disputing the fact that drink is the great cause of our ordinary prisons being so well filled. But whilst this is true, I have noted two other causes. Infidelity will have to answer for many young fellows being in prison through its influence upon their minds. The other evil I refer to is that of the spirit of gambling, so prevalent in these days, and many are now in 'durance vile' who were shopmen, and more especially servants in gentlemen's families, that would never have thought of robbing their employers had they not been tempted by the love of gain, produced by the increasing habit of betting.

CHAPTER III.

OTHER CONVICT PRISONS.

IT was from *Portsmouth* Convict Prison that the man Ray escaped, and was at liberty for a fortnight and then retaken at Oxford, where he had committed a burglary. I saw him chained in a yard breaking stones. I should consider this prison the worst-governed one I have ever visited, if I may judge by the awful number of poor wretches pining in solitude or working in chains.

Speaking of escapes, I had occasion, after visiting one of our London convict prisons, to be at the Home Office, and told a leading prison official there, that I thought there were means of escape which, if not guarded against, would allow some prisoners to get away. The official was very kind and gracious, but he said to me,—

‘Do you know how Rothschild is said to have made his fortune?’

I answered, ‘No, I do not think I have ever heard.’

‘By minding his own business and letting other people mind theirs.’

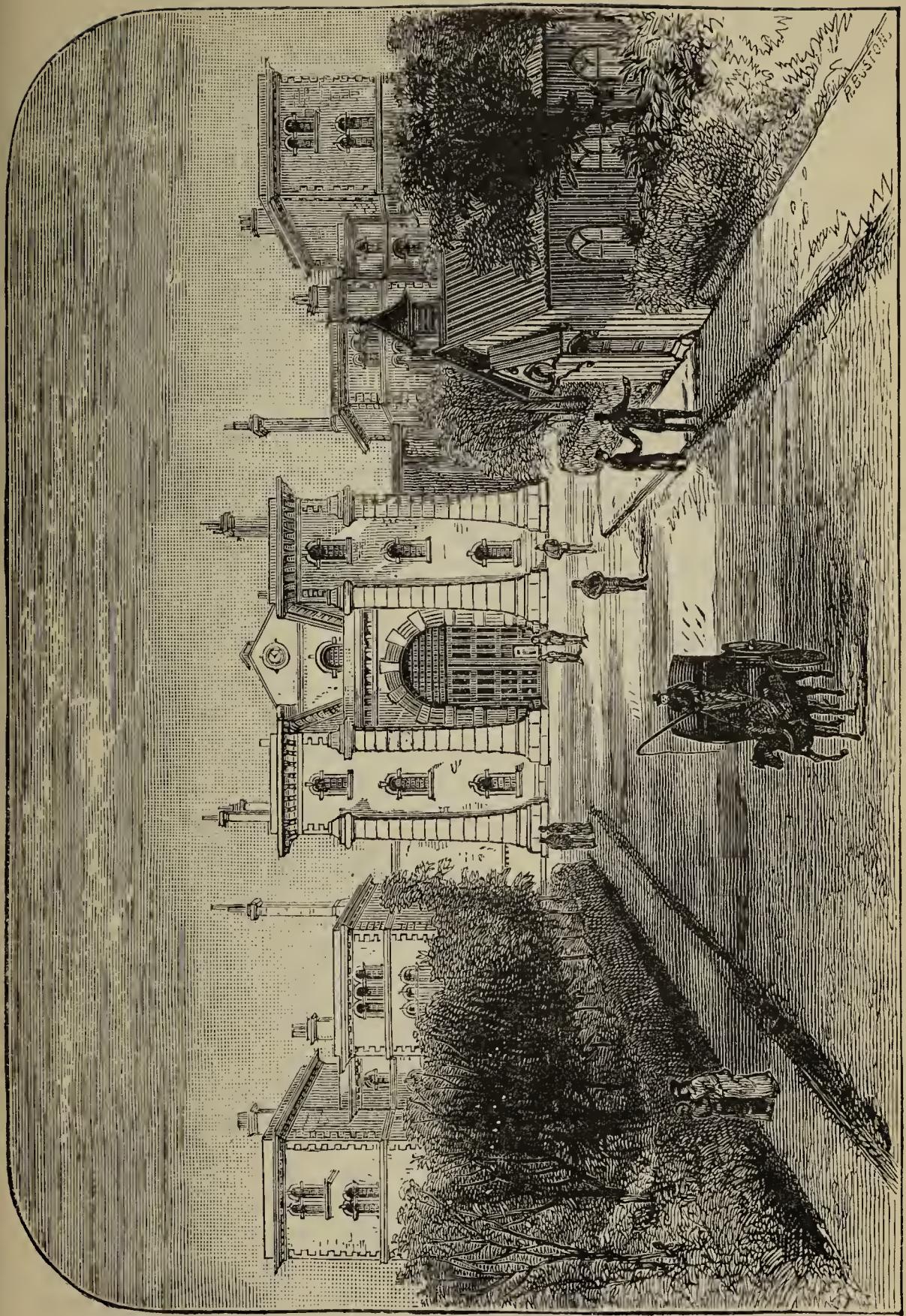
I had taken the trouble to draw out a diagram in my pocket-book before the eyes of the Director, but soon put it back into my pocket, and felt that perhaps, after all, I was interfering with what did not concern me. Wishing the gentleman good morning, I left the Home Office. *In less than a fortnight London was startled to hear of a convict having escaped from a London convict prison.*

Cold and bleak in summer, what must *Dartmoor* be in

winter? Driving across the Moor, my coachman, who was an employé in the firm which contracts to carry all the convicts to the prison from Tavistock, told me a sad story of the death of a poor convict, sentenced to seven years' penal servitude. He drove him to the prison with some others on a bitter cold winter day when the snow was very thick, the result being that he caught cold, from which he never recovered; the authorities, seeing he was in a dying state, discharged him after having served only three years of his sentence. His wife met him, and with difficulty, my informer said, he drove him carefully down to Tavistock, where he lingered for a few days, and then expired. He had been a commercial traveller, and was a most intelligent man. Is it right to thus endanger even the lives of convicts? Arriving at the prison, I passed under an archway over which was the inscription, carved in the stone, PARCERE SUBJECTIS, and conclude it is an abbreviated quotation from Virgil's *Æneid*, Book VI., line 853, '*Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*,' a simple translation of which would mean, 'Spare the humble, and crush the proud.' The convicts were coming in from work. As they passed I noticed one of them had been sentenced five times, his arm having five letters on it. Dartmoor was built at the end of the eighteenth century for the safe custody of prisoners of war, and many a Frenchman condemned to exist among the fogs and storms of this wilderness must have deeply felt the change from the climate of France.

Hundreds of these exiles are buried in the French burying-ground. The convicts here, I found, are engaged in land-farming and in quarrying, besides tailoring and bootmaking. All the outdoor gangs march out under the escort and care of the civil guard, and are at once ordered home if a fog comes on. Several escapes might be spoken of, besides revolts; but space forbids. All prisoners who were to be discharged used to be sent to Millbank, where, after being again photographed and a suit of fairly good clothes given to them, they were discharged about nine

WANDSWORTH PRISON.

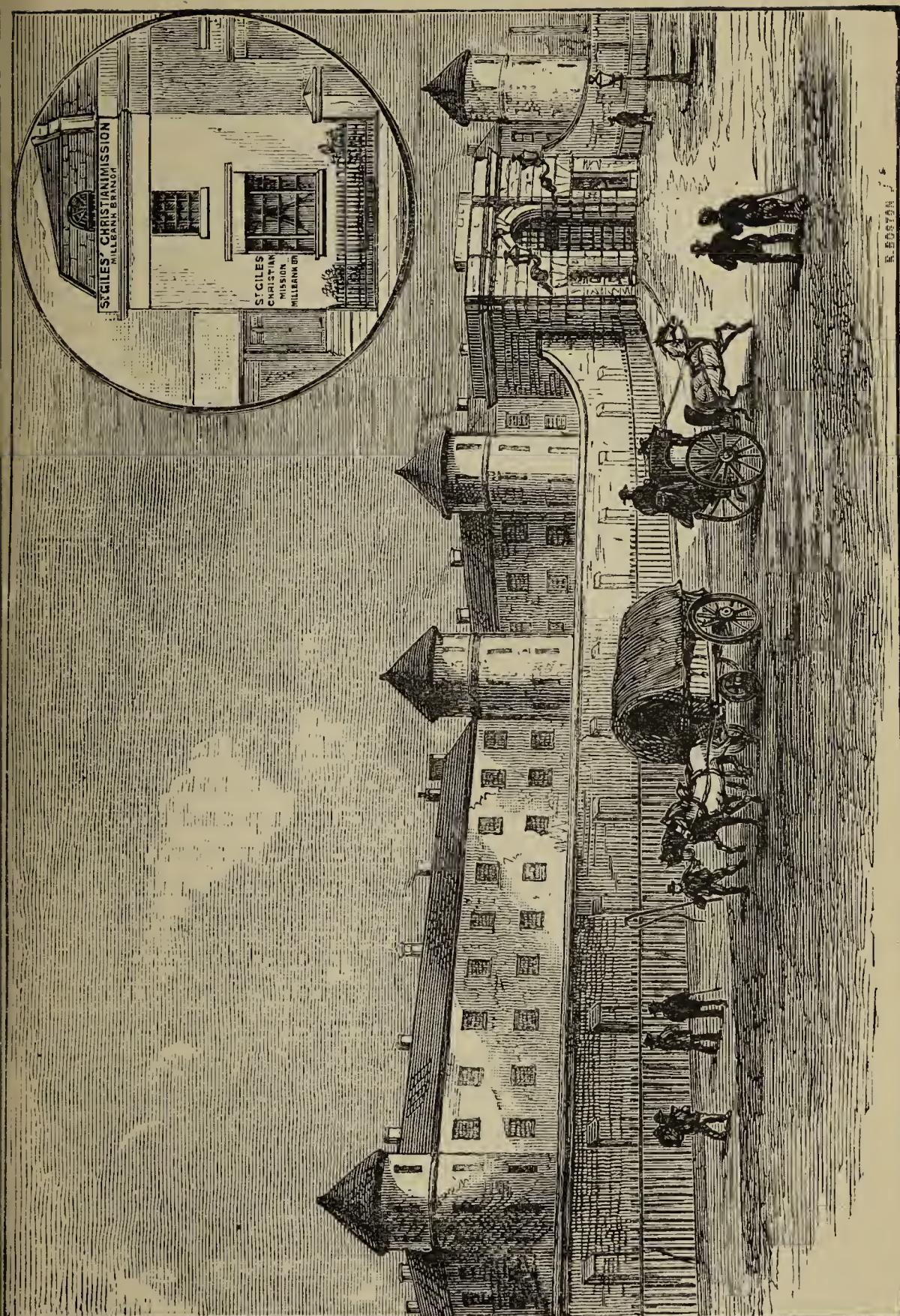


o'clock in the morning. A convict is allowed to grow his hair for the last three months of his time.

When visiting *Wandsworth* Prison, the governor, when speaking of *Millbank*, said, 'I have seen the outside of it, which is quite enough. I have no desire to see the interior.' Gloomy enough it looks, standing by the Thames, near Vauxhall Bridge. The many windows to be seen, erroneously supposed to be the windows of prisoners' cells, really only serve to light the passages running between the walls and the cell doors; all the cell windows look inward to the inner yards. The cleaning of the first-named windows, particularly of those which command a view of the river, has been described by a writer as 'somewhat of a holiday treat, and not a little sought after; for though it gives but a glimpse of the world, it still helps to bring to the memory visions of home.'

When I visited *Millbank* there were 506 prisoners there, not counting the women. This prison was also used for military offences, and I saw a number of soldiers engaged at shot-drill, and wearing a distinct dress with brass buttons and forage cap. Here I was told the same sad story of the cause of many being imprisoned. All prison officials testify alike that drink very materially helps to fill our prisons. *Millbank* is now closed as a prison.

Accompanied by my brother, Mr. George Cook, of Shepherd's Bush, I went down to *Chatham* one bright cold morning to visit the penal establishment there. I had heard of *Chatham* as being the place which all convicts dreaded. The work is supposed to be the hardest, whilst the men engaged in getting out the basins and building the dockyards have to work in mud and dirt, as some convicts have declared, 'up to yer knees.' However, the work they have done certainly does them credit. That prisoners did have a dread of *Chatham* may be gathered from the testimony of one who said, 'I don't mind being quodded, so long as it ain't *Chatham*.' Visiting the infirmary, we found several men in bed, one dying, from



MILLBANK.

self-inflicted wounds, to shirk the work. In the kitchen there were a number of men engaged, who, on our entering with the officer who was charged to take us round, stood still instantaneously with their hands to their sides like statues.

There was in the kitchen the murderer S—, who, some years ago, murdered a woman in Finsbury. Entering the bakehouse, and noticing a tall soldier-like man, we were informed he was M— of the Guards, who had kicked another soldier to death in the barracks in the year 1876. Of course we remembered that he was drunk at the time. K—, of the 'Turf Frauds,' we knew was here, and learning he was at work making bread, we asked the principal in charge 'which was K—.' 'Ah, sirr,' said the gentleman, with a strong Irish accent, 'Misther K— got too big for his boots, he would continue to talk; and when I would tell him I should have to report him he jist told me "he did not want any of my chat," and so I was obliged to report him, and now he is out on the works again.' K— has since been released, 'double remission' having been given him for information afforded in connection with a crime of which the detectives were convicted.

The governor of the prison now came up and offered to escort us to the Public Works, where the majority of the prisoners were at work. We first noticed a number of men with red stars on their caps and arms, who are known as 'star class men.' They are all supposed to have never been previously convicted; the stars confer no privilege, but these prisoners are kept by themselves. I found the cells where the prisoners eat and sleep to be very small—far too small: in fact, mere boxes of corrugated iron. Chatham, and one or two other prisons, were simply built for a few years, but they are still used. The sooner Government pulls them down the better. I asked the governor, Captain Harris, whether he thought they were large enough for men to live in. He said, 'The men only sleep in them'; but the truth is they spend all their time in them that they are not at work in the dockyard, and that

includes over twenty-two hours on the Sunday, and a great portion of the Saturday, and, being made of iron, must be cold in winter and stuffy and unhealthy in summer. Captain Harris, when asked again, said, 'It was not his place to think anything at all about it.' 'No; but give me your opinion.' 'Well, then,' said he, 'I do not think they are large enough.' Neither do I.

I noticed how very short the men's hair was cut, and remarked upon it to the governor. 'Yes,' he said, 'it is quite a special item with us.' 'Why?' 'Well, we think it tends to cleanliness.' 'Have you any other reason?' He smiled, and said, 'It is rather a good badge if a man tries to escape.' Passing through the stone-yard, where a number of long-sentence men were at work, the governor passed fearlessly in and out among the men, unprotected save by his own firm manner, who, if they liked, could have felled him to the ground with one of the iron tools they were working with. The truth was, whilst Captain Harris is respected by the men under him, he is also feared, being a most courageous and yet a most kind man. I am pleased to bear witness to the pleasant fact that not one man was in irons out of the 1250 convicts.

WOKING FEMALE CONVICT PRISON.

Since I last visited this place, the huge building opposite, formerly used for male prisoners supposed to be insane, has been disestablished, and is now in the hands of the military authorities.

Accompanied by the Baroness Wrede, I recently visited this prison. We were conducted over this large establishment of female convicts, and were glad to hear that there were 50 per cent. less of women convicts than there were some years ago. This is partly due to the fact that sentences are far lighter than they used to be, so that, instead of being sent to penal servitude, the sentence is more often two years' imprisonment.

The grounds in which the women exercise are very spacious, and are beautifully laid out with plants and flowers, and form a striking contrast to the small white-washed cells where they spend much of their time. They are occupied in making twine for the Post Office, boys' clothes for the training ships, and in laundry work.

The best-behaved prisoners we were informed were those under life sentences—generally young girls who had been convicted of infanticide. The dress of the women is not nearly so hideous as that of the male convicts, and the cells are a little more comfortable; the special class prisoners are allowed a looking-glass.

Many were the tricks invented 'to fetch *Woking*,' when in the old days the male prison was used. If Chatham is dreaded, Woking was the convict's delight. Fancy sitting beneath a covered corridor, before you a beautiful grass lawn a hundred feet long, surrounded by flower-beds, whilst in front of you is a magnificent panorama of the surrounding country, and you have Woking Prison and some of its convicts as I saw it, looking at the exterior. Inside I found a very comfortably *furnished* long room, called the 'recreation-room,' which contained an aviary, draughts, dominoes, paintings surrounding the walls, and sofas and other things to match. I thought, no wonder Woking was called the 'Thieves' Palace.'

In one cell I saw eight oil paintings frescoed on the wall, in another the Dying Gladiator, in black and white, and eleven pictures in oil.

A convict would try any scheme to get sent here, which, I must hasten to tell my readers, was the prison for imbeciles and invalids. 'Putting on the balmy stick' was often successful, and the strong, hearty, sane prisoner soon appeared at Woking as a poor harmless lunatic, who was allowed the use of the recreation-room, and to amuse himself almost as he liked. This will account for the pictures in the cells; many of them were fairly done, others were wretched attempts by those who had evidently mistaken their vocation. L. S., of the Penge mystery,

was engaged in this prison as a bookbinder. I saw him at work, and in his cell, on the shelf, noticed three small loaves of bread, which proves that the men are not half-starved.

Our Criminal Lunatic Asylums are at *Dundrum* near Dublin, *Perth* in Scotland, and *Broadmoor* in England ; and most expensive institutions they are, as one warder is required for every five or six prisoners. The Commissioners of Lunacy had under their charge at the end of the year 1887-8 716 criminal lunatics, the cost to the country being £31,020. All is done, no doubt, for the care and comfort of these poor beings ; but what an amount of sorrow, misery, and sin must be caged up in these abodes of wretchedness !

CHAPTER IV.

IRISH PRISONS.

HAVING heard on good authority that the Irish prisons were in the very best condition and under careful supervision, I had not hurried to visit them ; but now, having seen them also, I proceed to record my impressions of them.

No careful observer can travel through the length and breadth of Ireland—from Bantry Bay to Belfast, from Cork to Coleraine—without being struck by the marked contrast between the south and the north : the former is characterised by the squalor and poverty of the people, and by the miserable mud hovels they inhabit ; while comfortable, well-clad peasants and neatly-built cottages distinguish the latter.

But, if possible, more marked is the change and more striking the contrast you observe in this age of liberty and free speech, as you discover that on no account would you be permitted, though a British subject, and on British soil, to preach the Gospel in the open air in the south ; but when the north is reached, and prosperous Belfast entered, there you may preach Christ freely and fully. We had the pleasure of seeing some very fine open-air meetings in the above city, especially on the steps of the Custom House, where several thousands listened to the Rev. Mr. Grubb and myself for over an hour one Sunday afternoon.

The whole of the Irish prisons are under the same system. Instead of the awful uniformity of the gaols of

most civilised countries—where the orthodox whitewash is in full force, to the danger of the eyes of most prisoners, to say nothing of their reason—the prisons of this country are picked out in brown and blue through all the halls and corridors. Even the walls of the cells are tinged with blue. Spotlessly clean and carefully officered were all the prisons visited ; and if I speak only of some of them, they may be taken as a fair sample of the whole.

If very much depends upon the gentlemen who govern these places, then Ireland is to be congratulated ; for my experience of the governors, chaplains, and chief warders has been most satisfactory and pleasing, and their courtesy, ability, and piety worthy of emulation.

Mountjoy Convict Prison, Dublin, was our starting-point. Here we found some three hundred and fifty inmates, the carpenters' shop containing perhaps forty—most of them with long sentences, but all being very well-behaved men, not the usual type of criminals. They were under sentence as 'moonlighters,' and all of them hailed from the country : they had been led astray by political agitators, and are now reaping the sad results. From the first gallery of all the corridors of this prison, a netting of rope is stretched so that no prisoner can commit suicide by throwing himself on to the floor. This is carried out in all the gaols here ; and the plan might with advantage be copied by other countries. We were glad also to see that the men under first convictions never associate with or see other prisoners : this surely is another step in the right direction.

The county gaol adjoins Mountjoy, and here, as we entered, we saw the men about to be discharged whose time was up—a ragged regiment truly ! Answering to their names, they were once more allowed their liberty, and were not slow in taking their departure from what has been called 'Her Majesty's Hotel.'

Grange Gorman is the prison for women, and here we found them busy washing the clothes of police constabulary and of the prisoners of Kilmainham. We did

not hear so good a character given of these inmates. Not a few of those who are imprisoned for life are here for having murdered their husbands. I believe most officials would agree in saying that women criminals are far more difficult to manage than men. There is one poor old woman, aged seventy-five, who has spent forty years in prison. The surgeon proposed to her that he should petition to get her released, but she refused her liberty, and preferred to end her days in the quiet and peace of the old women's quarters of Grange Gorman in Dublin. This reminds me of what the chief warder told me at Belfast—viz., that a prisoner who was discharged with a few shillings which he had earned during his detention was again convicted after three days' absence; and when the 'Black Maria' discharged its contents at the door of the gaol, the man leaped through the gates, struck an attitude, and exclaimed enthusiastically—

Home ! sweet home !
However so humble, there is no place like home !

A few miles' drive from Dublin brought us to the historical prison of *Kilmainham*, where the five *Invincibles* were hanged for the *Phoenix Park* murders, and where certain *M.P.*'s have been detained. Captain *Leslie Beers*, the governor, was kind enough to give us all the information we asked for, and we were not a little surprised to be ushered into the largest and the best-lit prison hall I have ever seen. 'Yes, sir,' said the governor, 'a notable *M.P.* has declared in the *House of Commons* that "Kilmainham is a palace." It certainly was unlike most prisons; and when I remembered the dark dungeons of *Morocco*, the filthy places I had seen in *Greece*, and the unsanitary buildings of *Spain*, it might in contrast well be called a palace.

Cork Gaol contains 245 prisoners, and is a splendidly built prison, with large airy cells and all the modern improvements. It is as well kept as most of the other prisons in Ireland.

We had the pleasure when visiting *Belfast* of making the acquaintance of Dr. Spence, the chaplain, who tells of much good work being done amongst the prisoners. One man lately discharged said, 'I never go to my bed without thanking God that I was sent to prison.' There was a distinctly spiritual ring about the utterances of Dr. Spence. We felt thankful for such expressions as 'The grace of God can reach any heart,' 'The new birth changes the whole man'; and when speaking of the prisoners he said, 'I forget they are criminals and speak to them as men.'

Some five hundred are here imprisoned, two-thirds of whom are Roman Catholics; the proportion in the outside world of *Belfast* is just the reverse—two-thirds being Protestant and one-third Roman Catholic. This is significant and worth studying.

Some years ago the Government took over the care of all the prisons; till then the local authorities managed them. When that was the case, in Ireland every prisoner was supplied with a copy of the Bible. Since the above change, in most cases the Roman Catholic prisoners have been supplied with Reeve's 'History of the Bible,' which I need hardly say is issued by a Catholic publisher and upholds the teachings of the Church of Rome. I am happy to be able to record, however, that in *Belfast* *every* prisoner is still supplied with a Bible.

The natural humour and wit so characteristic of Irishmen is often seen, even in prison. A gentleman officially connected with the above prison told me the following story, the substance of which he himself overheard.

Two men were exercising in the yard, walking next to each other; and though talking is prohibited it is often done, and even chaff and banter are not unknown. One of the men had been convicted of stealing a cow, the other of robbing a man of a watch. 'Tim,' said the first man, 'what's the toime?' 'Bedad!' cried the other, 'shure it's just milking toime.'

CHAPTER V.

FRENCH PRISONS.

I HAD long wished to visit the French prisons, and in due time started for Paris ; and through the kindness of the English Ambassador, Lord Lyons, who gave me a letter of introduction to the Minister of the Interior, that gentleman gave the required permit, allowing me to visit the nine prisons of Paris and those also of Normandy.

In most other countries prisoners are thought of and cared for in some respects, I mean as regards their souls' welfare. In America exceptional liberty is allowed to prison philanthropists who seek the reformation and conversion of the inmates. In England the spiritual welfare of the thousands of our prisoners almost entirely depends on the chaplain. If he be a converted man all is well, but should he not happen to be, sad is the case of those under his care. Still, the prisoner has a Bible and a Prayer-book, to which he may turn for comfort in his dreary, lonely hours ; and in many, many instances, especially in the cases of 'first conviction' men, has the light of God shone through a prison cell into the heart of some poor 'wandering boy' through his reading the precious Word of God.

Alas ! in France the prisoner is not provided with a Bible, so that if the Spirit of God convinces him of his sin, where can he turn for light ? Sunday in the prisons is given up to recreation, with the exception of a ten minutes' mass. Look at that convict prison at Caen, in Normandy : no Bibles, no Christ, no sermon, no attend-

ance at chapel, the schoolmaster even forbidden to utter one word concerning religion in the prisoners' hearing. Once during the week for ten minutes the door of their cell is left open about a foot, that the words of the priest saying mass in a small chapel some fifty yards away may reach them.

After being taken to the Conciergerie, the prison where Marie Antoinette was confined, we went to that of La Roquette, where the Communists shot the hostages,—Archbishop Darboy, the Curé of the Madeleine, and sixty-four others. A marble tablet is let into the wall in the garden against which they stood.

In one day we visited six of the Paris prisons, and returned home worn out physically and depressed spiritually with the thought that 'no man careth' for the souls of the poor prisoners; and yet we rejoiced at what we had been able to accomplish.

For literary purposes I was desirous of adding to my knowledge the condition and system of these prisons; suffice it to say here, I found some of them most badly ventilated and dreadfully unhealthy, and feel very strongly that the system of keeping a man in solitary confinement for ten years, as has been the case in the convict establishments, ought to be abolished at once, for it drives him mad. In England we find that nine months is the maximum time we can with safety sentence a man to this punishment.

From Paris we came on to Rouen, where we found the prison healthy and well ventilated, the governor having had the windows cut down and made much larger. Leaving Rouen, I went on to Caen. It was here I saw a man who had been in a dark cell for twenty-five days, and who seemed almost blinded by the glare of the lantern I carried in my hand. Seven days' dark cell is the longest term allowed by English law; this poor man had several more days to stay there. After we left him, the chief officer of this prison said to me, 'I do not know a single case of reformation in thirty-five years.' Can it be wondered

at? There is nothing in their system calculated to reform; no Word of God, no Christ, no Gospel light: it can only tend to habitual criminality—to madness and despair.

And now my readers will be gladly surprised to hear that before starting on the inspection of the Paris prisons we had been to the Tract Dépôt, and having procured sound Gospel books and tracts, and thinking that my authority from his Excellency M. Waldeck Rousseau would hinder them interfering with me, we scattered the precious missives right and left through these dreary places, 'no man daring to make us afraid,' leaving the seed thus sown for the Church of God to pray over, and the Christ of God to bless, judging when we reached our rooms at night that it had been one of the most blessed and most important day's work we had ever been permitted to do for our Lord. From Rouen, Mr. Clark (who had accompanied me) returned home, leaving me to journey alone to Havre, Honfluer, Caen, and other places. I can only say the delight and wonderment expressed by the prisoners as they eagerly took the books repaid us for the labour entailed in this blessed work.

As I have before stated some men appear to be incorrigible and will not be helped when help is offered, here is an instance. One morning I was visiting La Roquette, near Père-la-Chaise. Passing along one workroom, I heard a voice say, 'Good morning, sir. Nice work this.' I said, 'You speak English, apparently.' 'Yes.' 'What are you?' 'A pickpocket.' 'Well,' I said, 'that is candid, certainly. How long have you got?' 'Twelve months, sir.' 'When are you released?' 'Friday week, sir.' 'Do you want work?' 'Yes, sir.' I said, 'There is my card; come and see me.' I knew very well that the French folks would soon put him on board a steamer, on the morning of his release, and pass him over to England. On Sunday afternoon week, at the close of the Bible reading at Hyde Park Hall, there walked down the centre of the building a young fellow, gentlemanly dressed, and the way he stood up and saluted me made me look at him.

'Do you know me, sir?' I said, 'La Roquette.' 'Yes, that is me, sir.' I said, 'Sit down, and have some tea. We will get to business afterwards.' After tea I said, 'Come to my private house to-morrow morning, and I will find you work.' Monday morning came, but not my gaol-bird. A fortnight passed, and a message from La Roquette prison came across the water again. He was in La Roquette once more, and had the impudence to write, 'Very kind sir,—Sorry to have to say I am back here for "two years," but if, when you go over to Paris, you will go to the hotel in Rue Caumartin, and take care of my portmanteau, I shall be obliged.' I did not do it; but when I passed through the Maison Centrale, the convict prison of Loos, near Lille, nearly two years later, I heard my name mentioned, and there was my gentleman, making umbrellas. He was just about finishing his two years as a convict. I said to the warder that took me round, 'What do you make of that man?' '*Oh, mauvais homme!*' I said, 'Yes, rather; I think he is.' I told him what I knew about him; and he said, '*Mauvais, mauvais, mauvais!*'

At this prison of Loos, near Lille, there are 1200 convicts. Having bought several hundred French Testaments in Paris, I came here with the hope of giving them away among the prisoners. The Trinitarian Bible Society have published a Testament in French for one penny, containing twenty pictures; and there is also sold in Paris a much better book for twopence (or twenty centimes), with stiff covers and a number of good, coloured maps. These I gave away to the officials and to many of the prisoners. Before I had gone over half the prison my stock of Testaments was exhausted; and, as in so many former visits to foreign prisons, I left the place without a single copy.

On another visit which I paid to Paris I was able to inspect the prison of St. Denis, which is situated in the suburb of St. Denis, where I found 980 inmates. They are principally those who have only very short sentences

to serve ; and on their discharge, if they cannot find work, they may come back here, where they will be fed, lodged, and paid a small salary. It was a sad sight, reminding one somewhat of our Ragged Church of London, or the Free Breakfasts at Edinburgh, for at the time of our visit they were all enjoying their midday meal. Again our books were offered, to the officials first, and then to these poor 'waifs and strays' of humanity. They were gladly accepted, and very soon our stock became again exhausted.

Sainte Pélagie, the gaol in Paris in which persons convicted of political offences are condemned to herd with criminal misdemeanants whose terms of 'durance vile' do not exceed a twelvemonth, is one of the worst places of confinement in the French metropolis. It is, therefore, with much relief that those publicists who have had any past experience or prospective apprehensions of this modern Bastille hear of its approaching demolition. The gloomy prison is situated near the Pitié Hospital and the Botanical Gardens, in the heart of that district where still exist some of the shabby boarding-houses described so minutely in the pages of Balzac. It had once within its walls Madame Roland, Joséphine Beauharnais, afterwards the Imperial Consort of Napoléon I., and also Béranger the Bard, who planted a famous vine in the court of one of its melancholy cloisters. During the period of the Restoration people were sent to Sainte Pélagie for anything which savoured in the least of sedition ; but then they were not only allowed to receive visitors, to eat and drink well,—provided they could pay for their food and wine,—but also to go out frequently—escorted, of course, by a turnkey, who, however, always remained at a convenient distance behind his charges. When I visited the above, the place was far from clean, and the prisoners appeared very miserable. We gave them our books to read, and prayed that God would bless them in their sorrow.

On our way home we were able to distribute a number

of copies of the Scriptures as we journeyed by rail, throwing them out to the platelayers, signalmen, and others whom we saw, each Testament being turned down and marked at John iii. 16, and on the inside front page of each book we had written, '*Les mots de Dieu pour vous ; lisez le bien.*' At one station we gave away sixty, the people coming from all parts to receive them.

I believe there is a possibility of some one taking a portion of the Word of God—say the Gospel of John, or better still the Testament—to every prisoner in Italy, besides many in France. If some one from England does not do it, it may never be done. Should no one else better able be stirred up to do this, then, God helping me, I would do it. I should prefer a companion, but, failing this, I am ready to go alone, should the Lord enable me.

When my friend Mr. Thomas Clark and I started for Italy, we had not intended visiting any prisons until reaching that country ; but having time to spare in Paris, and having a number of French Gospels, we determined to go to the *Maison de la Santé*, which contained 1303 prisoners. We passed on through workroom after workroom, and from cell to cell, till at last we reached the hospital, but, alas ! all the Portions were gone. A number of tracts, however, which were simply a selection of texts, were given to the poor invalids.

To avoid any mistake I asked, 'Have you any Bibles in this prison?' 'No !' 'Have you none in the library ?' 'I will ask.' Then, after some little searching, the librarian found one large French Bible, but that was the only copy they had. Would that I had had a thousand Testaments or Portions, for they could all have been given away without let or hindrance ; but not having intended visiting the French prisons I had made no provision, and only had procured a few dozen for general distribution.

At the *Dépôt Central* we attended a meeting, at which several pasteurs were present, including M. Theodore Monod ; we were glad to hear that a good work was being done amongst the Protestant prisoners by the French

pasteurs and lady visitors, much liberty being allowed them. In the evening we went to the house of Pasteur Appia, where a meeting was held to commend to the Lord two of their brethren who were leaving as missionaries, one going to Tahiti and the other to Basutoland.

On reaching Cannes, and hearing that there were a number of Arab prisoners of war upon the Isle of St. Marguerite, which is situated a little distance in the Mediterranean Sea, we thought it our duty to visit them and take them the Scriptures, and started in the little steamer which goes over to the island several times a day. Sad was the story some of these Arab prisoners had to tell. One fine man among them had nine children, and he was longing to get back to his home in Oran, in Algiers, to see them again. They had been there about three years, but no one could tell them when there was any likelihood of their being set free. They were allowed to walk about the island, and were well fed and cared for. Most of them spoke French. They eagerly accepted the Word of God, of which we had procured a fresh supply in Paris. They are a fine race of men, some of them being of the tribe of Marabout, the chief of which accompanied us over different parts of the fortress.

The Italian papers were concerning themselves about 'The Monte Carlo Scandal.' The average number of suicides lately had been four a week, and sometimes a murder in addition. A few weeks before a young fellow, a stranger, who had won very heavily, was followed, and whilst walking in the gardens of the Casino was killed and robbed of every penny. A petition against legalised gambling at Monte Carlo had been signed by the mayor and chief notabilities of the city of Marseilles, and was to be sent to the Chamber of Deputies; whilst a delegate of the International Committee for suppressing the gambling here was received in private audience of the Pope, who said: 'While deeply deplored the lamentable effects of the gaming tables there, and in presence of so many fatal consequences, he could not do less than express his dis-

approval of the impunity granted to a system of gambling, which was the cause of so many suicides, of the ruin of so many families, and the loss of so many souls.'

Many cases of suicide and robbery are hushed up, besides which there are nightly scenes and disturbances which only those know of who frequent the place. Some years ago I visited Monte Carlo to see it, and, with discretion, was enabled to give some small books away, for which I was warmly thanked.

A dreadful disturbance occurred just as I was leaving, the noise and confusion being such as to cause the gambling to cease for the time, whilst all eyes were attracted to a dark, wild-looking man, and a woman, who appeared to be engaged in angry dispute. The servants of the place were trying to silence the man, who was shouting and raving, whilst nearly a thousand persons were swaying to and fro in the wildest excitement. After some time they managed to get the man out of the place, and the next moment might be heard the roll of the ball, the click of five-franc silver pieces, and the voice of the croupier calling out the winning number. Very few young people are seen gambling, a few here and there in a small way, but the bulk of those who play regularly are middle-aged and old people—a sight truly appalling.

Having given away every Portion I had, not forgetting the servants in livery, I came away particularly struck with this one fact, that *no one* drank anything *but water*. Cannot England help in the pulling down of this stronghold of sin and Satan ?

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRISONS OF ITALY.

‘BUT you don’t think that you will be allowed to go to the prisons of *Italy*, and distribute the Word of God among the prisoners there, do you?’ asked my friends.

‘Well,’ I said, ‘I hope to do so ; I certainly mean trying.’

And when the work was done, and I had been from Milan to Puzzuoli, from Naples to Brindisi, and in each and every case had been permitted to supply the prisoners with copies of the New Testament, my friends of course said, ‘Who’d have thought it!’

I only now speak of some few of the cities of Italy, which will serve as samples of the whole.

In *Milan* my friend and brother Mr. Thomas Clark was too unwell to accompany me, and his place was filled by Captain Watson, an Irish gentleman ; and here we left, not only Testaments, but Bibles in both of the large prisons. The gaols did not strike me as being over clean, and the warders appeared far too rough in their dealing with the unfortunate criminals under their charge. We, however, were much encouraged in our work, and left the place praising God for His mercies to us.

Rome ! how impossible some few years ago would it have been to have visited the gaols here ; and to have attempted to have given away the Word of God in the prisons would have soon consigned the giver himself to the gaol. However, not a prison that Rome contains—from the Mamertine, where they say Paul was confined, to the Castle of St. Angelo, where, in 1830, in connection with the ‘Young

Italy' insurrection, Napoléon III. was imprisoned ; from the city prison, with hundreds languishing in sadness and in sorrow, to the convict prisons outside the city, away on the Campagna—but what we sought for, and obtained too, permission to visit, and where we gave to those confined the books which we desired that they should possess.

The Director-General of Prisons told us to expect that we should find the prisons of Naples in a very bad condition. We asked him, 'Why do you not try to make some improvement in them ?' A shrug of the shoulders was the only reply.

When Rome was finished, then came Naples. As we had been informed, we found the prisons dirty, and badly managed. In every cell and dormitory the food wasted was most noticeable; as many as eight or nine loaves might be observed in the cell, whilst a quantity of food was lying on the floor. We were again privileged to give to the men imprisoned the Word of Life.

We had just time to drive as far as Puzzuoli (the ancient Puteoli, where Paul landed) and see the large convict prison there, which we found well kept and clean, and where the officials permitted us to offer to the convicts our books, and graciously received them themselves. I was asked by a friend whether I did not think that after we had gone the books would be taken from them. I do not think so. Italy has lately made rapid strides, and the priests have far less power than they had. In proof of this I am able, with thankfulness, and yet surprise, to say that I have been officially informed that under certain conditions I could be allowed to put a number of Bibles in every prison in Italy. The Director-General will permit portions of the Scriptures to be distributed to every prisoner.

On reaching *Brindisi* we went to the old castle overlooking the harbour, now used as a convict establishment. Here there were 750 convicts ; * to our surprise we found them at work, though it was Sunday. We were told by

* Nearly a million prisoners are locked up every year in Europe, and about £10,000,000 spent in maintaining them during that time.

the Director that they all worked seven days in the week. Here we had some little difficulty about giving away the Gospel portions, but at last we got permission to do so.

As the prisoners saw us giving away the books they came to us in a body. The governor told them to stand aside and let us pass; still they pressed upon us, and I took all the remaining books I had, and threw them into the midst of the convicts. A hundred men were soon scrambling for the precious books, which consisted of the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John. The horrible sound of their chains and fetters clashing and clanging was dreadful to hear. As we re-passed them on our way out their faces had quite brightened up. If our visit had been nothing but a cheerful episode in the dull, dreary monotony of their existence, we should have been well repaid. Many of these unhappy prisoners were doomed to life servitude in chains. Many were at work making small fancy articles out of ivory and pearl; toothpicks representing Jesuit priests were favourite articles of manufacture among them. These were on sale in the prison, and could be bought for a mere trifle. The governor, on handing us the visitors' book to sign, asked us to write what we thought of the prison and its system, as he said, 'I have to send it to the Minister of the Interior.' The entry I made in the book was as follows: 'We found the prison clean, and the prisoners well cared for; but we trust the time will soon come when chains will be no longer required, and every prisoner supplied with a copy of the Word of God.'

Of Brindisi itself, I may say it is the dirtiest and most disgusting town I ever saw; its streets are a disgrace to the age in which we live.

I have revisited Italy several times. On one occasion, returning from Egypt, we crossed the Mediterranean in an Egyptian steamer; and one of the most interesting parts of our Mission was the distribution of the Scriptures to those on board. Turks, Greeks, Albanians, Cretans, Italians, were all delighted to accept our little books, and

knots of men were soon found comparing the different Gospels. Our Greek Portions were very useful here, and having the Word in four or five different languages, we were able to supply them all. After visiting Greece, we sailed from the Piræus for Brindisi in the Greek steamer *Elpis*, and here again the variety of costumes told us of the many nationalities which were represented. Most of these were from Albania and Thessaly, and were going to the Island of Corfu. To all of these we gave books, several of them particularly asking us to give them the four Gospels. The sail down the Gulf of Corinth is peculiarly beautiful, and we were favoured with very fine weather, the snow-clad hills reflecting in majestic splendour the glories of the setting sun.

One of the most interesting cities of the world is *Venice*. Moscow is quaint and unique, Cairo is interesting and strange, London is immense, Paris is fascinating, but Venice has a charm of its own ; its silent waterways, its magnificent Cathedral, and its lonely Square of St. Marco, all add to its beauty and its charm. Its prisons I have visited, and its hospitals I have entered, and in these places left with the inmates the message of God's love to guilty men.

The very prison which was owned by the Inquisition is still intact, and cells once familiar to martyrs are now used to confine criminals. The Bridge of Sighs still connects the palace with the prison ; and who shall tell of sorrows felt, of miseries endured, of agonies experienced, and yet of joys that have been realised, by those who have crossed that bridge, to wait with wearied watchings the hour of their release, or to be hurried by a martyr's death to wear a crown of life ?

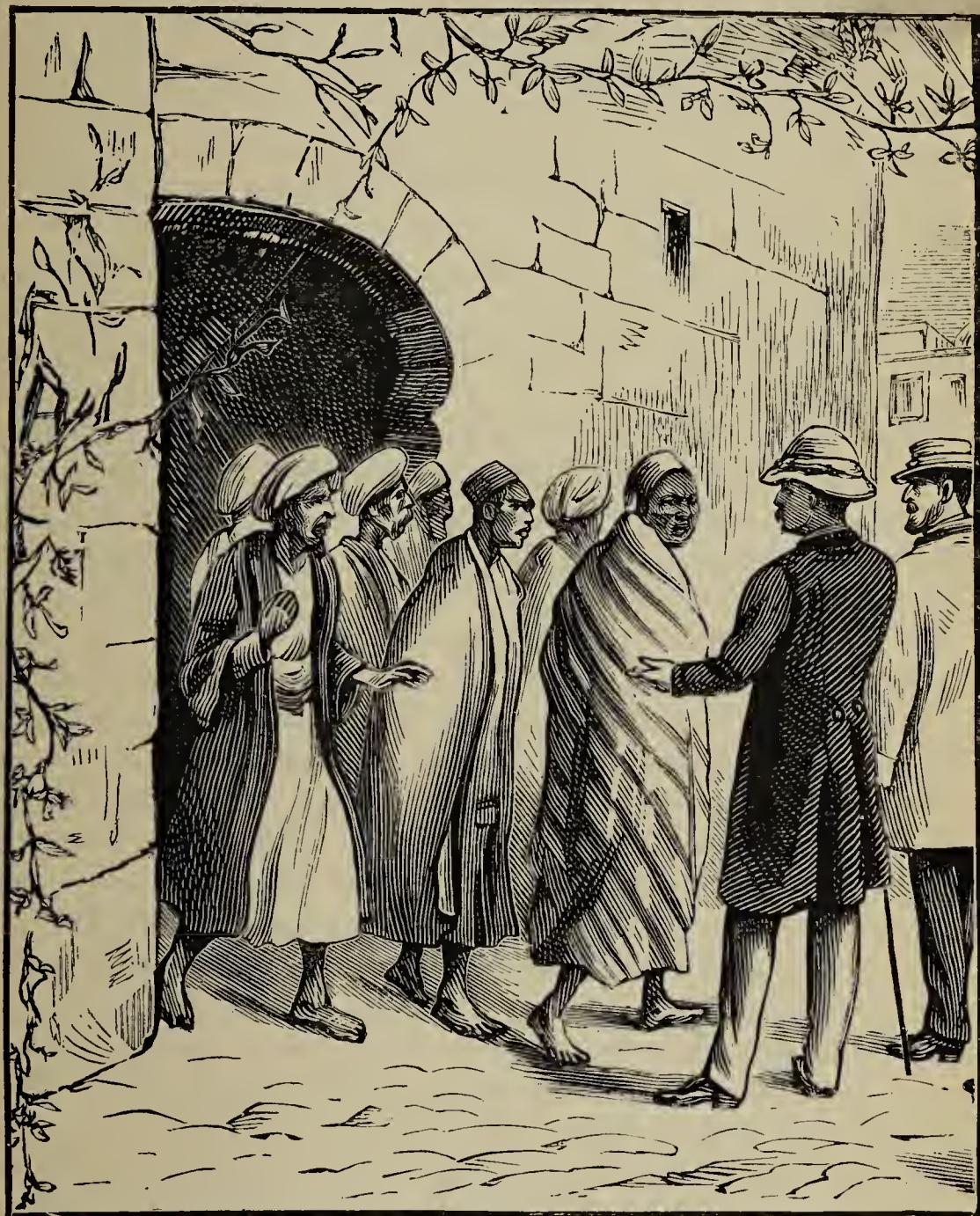
When leaving Venice, we gave away a hundred Portions to the gondoliers, and supplied nearly every one in the station. Resting at Baveno on Lago Maggiore, we enjoyed a day's fellowship with our brother, Mr. Cheyne Brady, and his family ; then homeward bound through the St. Gothard to Lucerne in Switzerland. In Strasburg we had many opportunities of distributing Portions as we came along.

CHAPTER VII.

EGYPTIAN PRISONS.

SOME few years have elapsed since I visited *Egypt* and travelled through the land from north to south, and certainly the prisons then were in a deplorable condition ; but thanks to Dr. Cruikshank, the Director, and the late Mr. Clifford Lloyd, things are much better now. I found over 1300 men in prison awaiting trial, many having been thus confined for years. Such was the deplorable condition that we found them in, that I was led to write to his Highness the Khedive, and protest strongly against the condition of things as we found them, and almost demanded in England's name that the prisoners should be released or tried immediately. I am thankful to say that in less than three days I had news that something would be done, and the *Times* of the following morning printed the following telegram from Egypt : 'It has pleased his Highness to release 150 prisoners, and the rest are to follow.' Mr. Clifford Lloyd, to whom I had also written on the subject, sent me the following letter : 'Prisoners are being tried and released as quickly as possible, though it has been with great difficulty that any lists of them have been procured showing the charges. I found some prisoners in gaol, charged with theft, pending trial for six years and nine months, many for over five years also. Believe me that all my sympathies are with this down-trodden and oppressed people. We have already done a great deal for them. They are not liable now to be imprisoned at the will of the Mudir, and are not subject, as before, to the

extortion of older days. There is much yet to be done, I need not say, and our difficulties are many and great,



RELEASE OF EGYPTIAN PRISONERS.

but with patience I have no doubt all these will be overcome.'

In Upper Egypt some of the prisons were dreadfully

overcrowded and unhealthy. More than one governor had asked us to bring the state of the prisons before the authorities in Cairo, and in one particular case, at Esneh, where they were unable to get sufficient water, the governor met the steamer as we came down the Nile, and implored us to send another water-carrier. At Soag there were 255 men in one room, thirty-one yards by eight. At Assiout two men came with petitions in their hands, the first being condemned to death. The governor said he had killed a man in a passion, for having murdered his sister. The second case was that of a man against whom no witnesses could be produced, and yet he was kept imprisoned.

We distributed Arabic portions of the Word all through the land, only, however, to persons who could read; but we found many who could, both on board the steamers and at the railway stations. The prison officials who could read were apparently only too glad to have them, though they knew what the books were.

We went through the whole land of Egypt, visiting the prisons on both sides of the Nile; but though we had seen prisons in many countries, we had never seen such unhealthy places as these, nor found so abominable a system. Men were thrown into prison here simply because they were witnesses, and might be required; and until lately the bastinado was freely used in all the gaols.

It was quite a common thing to find the water which the prisoners drink kept in a vile condition, and a cesspool under the ground where the men lived and slept. No work was given them to do, and they had nothing to sit or sleep upon but the dusty ground. There were scores of these men who had been imprisoned for years, and who have had nothing to do all that time. In the cities this was being altered. Too much praise cannot be given to the Director for the good already accomplished. Several of the prisons had been thoroughly cleansed, and the men were being taught to make rush mats, while raised boards and blankets are supplied for them to sleep upon.

CHAPTER VIII.

BAVARIA, GREECE, AUSTRIA, HUNGARY, WURTEMBERG, AND GERMANY.

FROM Egypt I went to *Greece*, and, excepting Morocco, Greece has the dirtiest prisons on record. I could have scraped the dirt off the floors and stairs. It was more than a quarter of an inch thick on the stairs and the rooms where the men slept. I found ten men sleeping, and living, and imprisoned, in a room ten feet square; no ventilation but when the door was opened and shut. I found a second room, nineteen feet square, with twenty men in it, sleeping and living, no work to do and no books to read, and one poor man nearly dying; and with little or no food to eat. I could hardly ask them to accept the Bible till I had ordered coffee all round, for coffee to a Greek is meat and drink; and when they saw that we cared for their bodies, they listened to us as we told them that we had got something for their souls. We gave away unhindered as many copies of modern Greek Gospels as there were prisoners in that prison of Athens, and got a receipt for them. So bad was the prison treatment in that prison in Athens, that three men, risking their lives, escaped, and they only caught one. However, I lodged a complaint with the Ministry at the headquarters of the Government against the dirt and the state of the prison at Athens. They have never yet condescended to give me an answer, but I am glad to state that it was the means of calling their attention to the state of their prisons, and

that since my visit they have been pulling down their old gaols and erecting new ones.

In *Austria*, of which I would now speak, there is little real religious liberty. The wife of the chaplain to the Ambassador told me that her husband cannot have a public prayer meeting even in their own house. You are hindered on every hand in your endeavours to do good. We have managed, however, to give away 450 Testaments in four days. In country carts as they were journeying homeward empty, in the baskets hanging on the backs of the women returning from the markets, and in all sorts of places, have we dropped and left them. Among the labourers on the river-side, in the fruit and other markets, we have given them to the people, who were all delighted with them ; and as we had so often to ask our way, we always felt ourselves obliged to offer the friend who had directed us a New Testament for his trouble. I made bold on one occasion to even offer one to a fine tall police sergeant, who had kindly directed me the way I wished to go. He accepted the gift, bowed most graciously, and with the usual 'Danke schön' (thank you, beautiful) raised his hat, and I mine, and we parted.

On reaching *Hungary* we felt we were breathing another air. The country and its history speak of liberty and chivalry. Though still under the rule of Austria, the Hungarians are a liberty-loving people. In one large city we went over a prison, and had the extreme pleasure of being permitted to give every prisoner a copy of the New Testament. Servians, Hungarians, Croatians, and Germans all received the Word in their own language. Very nearly all could read, and the few who could not were attending school. Not a single prisoner had any portion of the Bible in his possession. We took care that a hundred of the copies should be in large type for those who were aged.

Crossing the Danube we visited Ofer, where we found two large houses of detention. Here we gave two hundred Testaments to the inmates, and one hundred to the soldiers.

The ventilation of the cells was very bad, the stench being dreadful. Whilst here we were pleased to make the acquaintance of Rev. Andrew Moody, of the Scotch Church, whose labours are abundant in this city.

Having succeeded beyond our expectations, we 'thanked God and took courage,' and started again for Austria. Then followed the best day's work we ever had; for we left 690 Testaments in the gaols. The journey from Hungary to Austria is through a picturesque country, dotted here and there with clean and pretty villages, the vines burdened with grapes and the trees laden with fruit. All along the journey we distributed Hungarian Testaments and German Portions.

By the aid of our credentials we were soon in possession of the needful authority for visiting the prisons of Austria. It would not be wise to speak in detail, lest our purpose may be frustrated; it is enough to say that Catholics, Protestants, and Jews alike shared in the blessing of having the Word in their own language, we having received a written acknowledgment, signed and stamped by the prison authorities, to the effect that they had been received for the use of the prisoners.

We next visited *Grätz*, the capital of Styria, where there were many sick by reason of the poor food supplied. The stamped receipt mentioned above was a great help to us here, and again we met with success. We were sorry to find an Englishman here under a sentence of eighteen years, of which he had completed nine. We were thankful to be able to supply him with an English Testament. From *Grätz* we next came to *Trieste*, scattering portions all along the route among the villagers and the employés on the railway; the greatest astonishment was shown when they found they were only asked to accept the books.

After visiting *Stuttgart*, the capital of Wurtemberg, and distributing some New Testaments both to prisoners and officials, we passed on to one of the cities of Bavaria, where we visited three prisons. In one the discipline seemed so lax, and the gaol so little like a prison, that

some of our London cracksmen would have laughed at the idea of keeping them confined in such a place. The convict establishment here is an awful place; the prisoners rise at 4.30 A.M., and work on till 6.30 P.M. They are not allowed (as in some prisons) to smoke, and some of them prefer to spend all their time in solitary confinement rather than associate with other prisoners in work.

What a striking contrast I find in German prisons to those of other Continental countries. France in her dealings with criminals is excessively severe; Italy is careless alike of their health and their morals, making them work seven days in the week; Austria is intolerant to a degree of any one but the priests of Rome seeking their spiritual welfare; and Spain, with her filthy gaols, is a disgrace to the nineteenth century; but one and all are identical in never supplying their prisoners with the Word of Life. In one prison in Belgium I have seen sixty men in one room all sentenced 'for life.' In a Spanish prison in North Africa there were nearly 3000 men, mostly with life sentences, but in no instance had any of them ever had a copy of the Scriptures, save as I had managed to supply them. Here, after I have visited the prisons of Berlin, I have the joy and pleasure to report that in every cell I found a copy of the Scriptures and a hymn-book.

The treatment compares favourably with our own. There are light and airy workshops, well ventilated; many are working at trades, thus partly paying for their own expense to the State, and laying up a little for themselves when released. Here and there you see a portrait of mother and sister, or perhaps a wife, on the table of the lonely cell. Liberty is given to certain godly people to visit the prisoners, whose efforts to bring them to a sense of their sinfulness, and thus produce conviction, which may lead to conversion, have not been without fruit. There are also societies ready to take in hand the released prisoner, and start him afresh. All this on the Continent was to me novel and pleasing; and there are many things

in the system of prison discipline and management, as arranged in Germany, that England would do well to follow.

In the central prison in Berlin a large stained window in the chapel and the large Bible in the pulpit were the gift of the late Empress Augusta. The signatures of the old Emperor and Empress were pointed out to me in the visitors' book, where the name of the Emperor William is also found.

Thanks to Count Bernstorff, my stay here was pleasant, and my work easy. I looked in at the Y.M.C.A., and found a live, healthy association, apparently in good hands. On Sunday I heard a bright, earnest, evangelical sermon in the American Church: 'new birth,' 'atonement,' and such words, told of no 'uncertain sound.' Those who reside here say Berlin has greatly improved these last fifteen years. I must add, however, in closing, that they have followed England in gambling. As in our own land, it has greatly increased. Men cry out in the streets the sporting papers and the sporting news. Races seem by the advertisements to be always going on, and men are as much absorbed in the intoxication of gambling as in London.

CHAPTER IX.

MOROCCO.

LEAVING England by the steamship *Britannia*, one Sunday evening found us taking the service in the saloon ; and on the Monday, when Miss Herdman, of the North Africa Mission, and myself, spoke of the prisons of Morocco, and other places, the audience voluntarily gave us a collection of £6, with which we supplied every prisoner we saw and visited in Morocco with food.

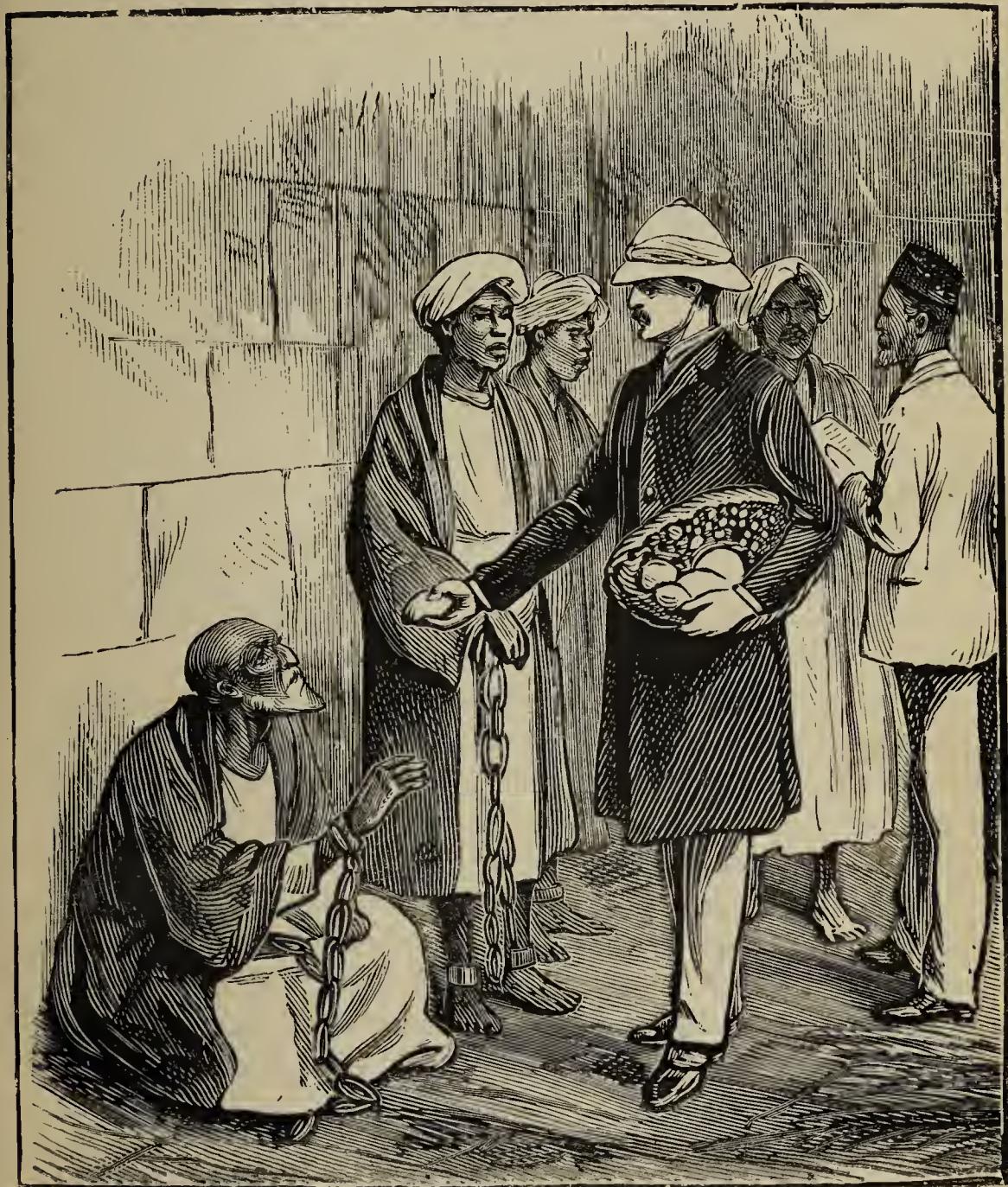
After a series of meetings at the Soldiers' Institute, Gibraltar, in company with Dr. Churcher I sailed for Tangier, and had my first experience of Moorish prisons. Certainly they eclipse all I have ever witnessed. Egypt was bad, Greece was worse, but Morocco is too bad to describe.

Lady Green, the wife of the Ambassador, had said to me, 'The prisons of Morocco are hopeless and heart-breaking.' And truly I have found them so. Sometimes Europeans had thrown oranges through the gratings of the gaols, which appeared to be devoured whole ; and when bread had been given to some, it was fought for by scores of hungry men.

Hundreds of these poor prisoners are known to be unjustly detained. Cases are known to me where all the relations of a prisoner are thrown into prison simply because they are related to him.

Having purchased all the bread the town of Tangier possessed, and a basket of grapes, we made our way to one of the prisons on the Kasbah, and soon stood in the

middle of scores of poor hungry-looking captives, many of them heavily chained, who live and sleep in this filthy



DISTRIBUTING BREAD IN MOROCCO.

place, which has no drainage, and where such a thing as washing themselves, or changing their clothes, is unknown.

Here we distributed the bread and grapes, and gave to every man who could read the Gospels in Arabic, and held a short service, reading the Word of God and preaching the Gospel.

The authorities for some time would not permit me to enter the other prison, as they said 'it was dangerous to go amongst the worst prisoners,' but on my persisting, and through the Consul sending up a guard of soldiers, we then were permitted to go inside, and found it to be more filthy than the first.

Thankful, indeed, were these poor chained captives for the food which we gave them, and attentively did they listen as a Syrian brother read to them the story of a Saviour's love, and exhorted them to cast their burdens on 'Seidna Aissa,' our Lord Jesus.

One man in particular claimed our attention, and sought our intervention. He had given evidence of being a child of God. He was a tall, dark Soudanese, and on some slight pretext had been thrown into prison, and so much money demanded before he could be released. He had been in the habit of attending the Gospel services in Tangier, and our brethren had good hopes that he had been brought to the knowledge of the truth. After some considerable delay and difficulty I obtained his release, paid the ransom demanded, set him free, and to my great surprise saw him in the evening at the drawing-room meeting at Hope House, surrounded by the noble band of workers of the North Africa Mission. What a contrast! One hour in a filthy dungeon, and with such surroundings; the next in the company of refined ladies and the comforts of civilisation.

A good open-air meeting was held in the 'Sok' (market), and after we had spoken and had a hymn from 'Songs and Solos,' bread was distributed to the blind and poor.

The above places are not adequate specimens of the dungeons of Morocco. The moment you get towards the interior they are very much worse; language fails to describe them.

Sir Kirby Green had told us it was not safe to journey into the interior to Fez or Mequinez then, as the wells were so low and the water so bad ; so that I was obliged to go by way of Ceuta to Tetuan, and, in company with Major Hipwell and Captain Ward of Gibraltar, I was enabled to visit that very Moorish city.

I think the inmates of the prisons here looked worse than those I had seen the previous week. Having counted them, I bought in the bread market a large loaf for each man, which would be enough for at least two days. I was able to give a large number of Arabic Gospels away in the streets ; and, where we found the people could read, we gave them the Scriptures.

I was interested in another prisoner, and endeavoured to obtain his release. I went to the Governor, then to the *Magistrate*, but it was of no use. I am afraid the presents we offered to his Excellency were not deemed sufficient ; but one would want a long purse to set free a tithe of the poor prisoners unjustly detained. Even to reach some of these places, swollen rivers have to be forded, mountains to be crossed, and Moorish soldiers taken by way of safety, for in the Riff country a man is often murdered for his *jelab* (coat), worth four shillings. The prisons of Morocco are one and all fearful dungeons ; the drainage is *nil*, with very little light and air, and the stench unbearable. Before a man can be discharged, he must pay the policemen who arrested him, as well as those who release him. He must *bribe* the gaoler ; and in the case of one man, when all this had been done, Miss Herdman asked, ‘Why does he not come out ?’ The reply was, ‘Oh, you must first give some more money for the use of the chain which he wore.’

CHAPTER X.

THE PRISONS OF SPAIN.

THREE thousand convicts, mostly 'for life,' are im-
mured in *Ceuta*. This was the first Spanish gaol
I visited, in the hope of leaving with the prisoners the
Word of God. *Ceuta* is on the North African coast, being
a Spanish province or colony in Morocco. Owing to the
influence of the late Sir W. Kirby Green, then British
Ambassador at Tangier, every obstacle was removed
which would have hindered my visiting the place. Unlike
most prisons of Europe, the men were employed in no
kind of work; hundreds were standing listlessly about. A
few offered me some small articles which they had made,
some of which I bought, taking care to make the vendors
a present of a Testament.

The worst criminals from Spain are sent here. There
was a brigand who laughingly confessed he had killed
seven men; another, who had recently murdered four
men; and yet another, bound hand and foot, and confined
in a totally dark cell, waiting to be shot.

No less than 112 men sleep in one large room, and in
this one part of the prison there are twelve such brigades,
as they are called. The only wonder to me is that they
do not oftener break out in rebellion; it seems a great
mistake to allow these men to idle away their time. The
place was far from clean. Those who are well behaved
are allowed out in the town, and serve as a sort of police,
while their wives keep shops, many of them wine-shops.
Very little restriction is put upon them, but they are

obliged to be back into their prison by evening gun-fire. How I longed to be able to give a Testament to every convict ! Though unable to do this, it was cheering to see their gratitude, and hear the thanks from those to whom I did give copies of the priceless Book.

San Roque I also visited, which is near Gibraltar. Here the governor had himself been locked up for bribery. Again I found there was no work for the prisoners to do. An Englishman was in this place for brutally ill-treating his wife. What touched our hearts most was noticing a little boy who, for some trifling offence, had been imprisoned. The mother of the child, rather than allow him to go alone, had preferred to suffer with him. This prison was very filthy.

Next came *Cordova*, and here no hindrance was offered me as I distributed the books. A small square place was pointed out as having been used in the days of the Inquisition, into which many martyrs had been thrown and devoured by wild beasts. In one lofty dungeon, where the windows were high up, a prisoner had been kept for nineteen years without once being allowed outside ; when they brought him into the light and sunshine the change was so great that it occasioned his death. The Mosque at *Cordova* is worth a journey from London to see. Here I met the Hon. Granville Waldegrave and the Marquis of Ailsa, and was thankful for the fellowship enjoyed in a strange land.

A tedious journey next day brought me to *Linares*, where Mr. Wigstone is faithfully labouring. On the Sunday I preached to his English congregation. Lady Congleton and myself also addressed the Spanish congregation which crowded the comfortable building which Mr. Wigstone uses. Lady Congleton and her daughter were visiting the brethren labouring in Spain, and cheering many hearts by their presence in this dark land. Not only is it dark, but the people are cruel. Hardly a cat that I saw but had its tail and ears cut off close, while the weekly bull-fights are a disgrace indeed. With Mr.

Wigstone I went to the gaol, and not only left with the prisoners nearly three hundred Gospels, but held a short meeting in the prison yard, and exhorted those present to seek to turn from their evil ways, and serve the Lord.

In *Madrid* I found Mr. Fenn in the midst of his busy and valuable work. His schools are a credit to him; whilst his services are wonderfully well attended, and many are there who have been brought by his ministry from the idolatry of Rome to the light of the Gospel. But he is sadly needing helpers; there is room for several young earnest evangelists in Madrid, and I pray that what Mr. McAll has done for Paris may soon be done in Madrid. The people are ready. The evil lives of many of the priests are well known, and there is an open door for the Gospel. I visited the prisons here, and would only briefly say that I was able in many cases to put the New Testament into the hands of the prisoners. The authorities asked me to report to them my impression of their prisons, which I did, complaining very distinctly of the badly-ventilated prison of *Linares*, which I had just come from. The Minister thanked me, and promised that it should at once be seen to.

It was at *Linares*, I believe, that I caught the prison fever, from which I suffered so much when I returned. It is the only occasion that my health has been affected, and, considering how many filthy dungeons I have been into, I feel profoundly thankful.

CHAPTER XI.

AMERICAN PRISONS.

‘**S**URE, sor, it’s me boy I’m going to see,’ answered the old Irishwoman, in answer to my inquiry as to whom she was going to visit. We were on board the ‘Prisoners’ boat,’ having just left New York, and were bound for ‘Blackwell’s Island,’ on which is situated the City Prison. Having landed, we entered the prison, and I was much surprised at many things I saw. Whilst waiting for an official to take me round, I noticed that the dress of the prisoners was much more becoming and far less hideous than that of our own convicts ; in fact, for some time I was uncertain whether several of the women whose friends had come to see them were prisoners or not : one ladylike-looking prisoner had a black silk lace shawl over her shoulders. All the prisoners were allowed to see their relatives and friends together in a large waiting-room, where I was sitting ; this is in marked contrast to our own system, where the prisoner is in a small compartment, the friend in another opposite, each divided off by wirework, and a warder in the passage between. Presently the young Irish lad, about nineteen, entered, and for fully five minutes neither mother nor son spoke ; sobs and tears choked the utterance of words. How true it is that when we sin we generally cause others to suffer with us. My next surprise was in seeing the old lady open a basket which she had brought with her, which was full of cakes, and raspberries, and other good things, which the young man began eating.

‘The Tombs’ Prison in New York, which answers to our House of Detention, is a massive building of Egyptian architecture. Here I preached to the prisoners on the Lord’s day, and visited them individually during the week. In the corridor known as the ‘Murderers’ Row,’ I found three poor men condemned, and did all in my power to put Christ before them in all simplicity, and eternity in all its reality. Before the address was given on the Sunday, a lady sang ‘Where is my wandering boy to-night?’ When she had finished, the prison rang again with the shouts of ‘Bravo, bravo,’ from the prisoners, whilst every one clapped their hands with delight.

In *Auburn*, New York, some years ago, they discovered a private distillery going on in the prison ; and not a great while ago there was a complete manufactory for the making of counterfeit coin in this same gaol, and the prisoners and some of the warders were supplied with bogus money,—which puts me in mind for a moment of what took place in England not many years ago. If our prisoners are very bad, some of our sub-warders are not very good. A warder will sometimes connive at and bring food, and tobacco, and spirits surreptitiously into a gaol. I knew of a case where outside friends supplied a warder with £20 to give their friend, a notorious convict, a little extra food every day whilst he was there : £20 was given to the warder, and when the prisoner was released, he said to his friends, ‘Why didn’t you look after me ? That “screw” was all right.’ (The ‘screw’ was the warder.) ‘Why,’ said the friends, ‘we gave him £20.’ ‘£20,’ said he, ‘why, I didn’t get twenty pence’ worth !’ and he went down to the very town where that particular prison is, and put another friend to work. He spoke to this warder, and said, ‘I have got a friend inside : can you manage it ?’ ‘Oh, yes,’ said the warder, ‘it is all right.’ ‘Here are two “flimsies” for you,’ and he handed him two £5 notes. The warder said, ‘I will make it all right.’ He waited in the town for a week, and the warder was soon charged with uttering a bad £5

note ; the second was found in his house. Both the 'fivers' were *bad* 'flimsies.' He got 'ten years' penal servitude,' and one feels tempted to say, 'It served him right.'

If England's discipline in her prisons is far too severe, the prison discipline in America is certainly too lax. One good thing that I know about the American prisons is, that they allow any qualified person to go in and preach the Gospel. I found no difficulty in having open doors. I had my credentials, and was recognised there as one who sought to help the prisoners ; and I found that, being accredited, I obtained leave to preach ; and I thank God for the privilege I have had of preaching Christ in those American gaols.

I would say, before closing this short chapter, that there is a great need of the whole system of America being closely examined and seen into ; and quite recently there have been very serious complaints concerning needed hygienic improvements.



CHAPTER XII.

THE PRISONS OF RUSSIA.

LEAVING Berlin, a journey of eighteen hours brought us to the frontier town of Wirballan, in Russia, where all passports were rigorously examined, and whence, after an hour or more of delay, we proceeded. The traveller at once sees he is in a different country: the well-dressed and tidy peasant of Germany has given place to the signal-woman without shoes and stockings; the red-tiled houses and trim gardens of Prussia are exchanged for the dirty grey log huts which form a Russian village, and which I at first took to be so many cattle-houses. Instead of landscape made up of hill and dale, rivulet and valley, and the tilled fields of a contented people, there is simply a clearing in the interminable forests of trees, along which the lines of rail run from the frontier to St. Petersburg, with here and there a sight of open flat country with the unpicturesque villages above described, but with hardly a man or woman to be seen for miles together. Nature seems to have dealt hardly with the Russian peasant,

there being nearly eight months of winter. Certainly the authorities who rule him deal hardly with him, and yet he takes it with true Eastern indifference, for I know no people who are capable of enduring so much hardness and suffering as the Russians. 'Oh, it is nothing,' is the expression you often hear.

St. Petersburg was reached after forty-three hours of travelling. My object was twofold. I wished to distribute the Word of God among the prisoners in Russia; but I also desired to find out by investigation whether the reports as to cruelties practised in some of the prisons were true. If one quarter of what we have recently heard were true, surely there is need for something to be done; and there was more likelihood of getting at the truth in Russia than in England. For the present I desire only to speak of the work I was permitted to do in the prisons by preaching the Gospel, and by the distribution of the Word of God.

My first step was to obtain permission from the authorities to visit the gaols. As so many disclosures had recently been made, friends both in England and Russia prophesied failure; but M. Galkine Wrasskey, the head of the exile system, on my producing my credentials from other Governments, at once gave me permission 'to visit the prisons, to speak to the prisoners, and to give away copies of Holy Writ.' This was more than I had even asked for, and I praised the Lord for His guidance and His blessing. Our beloved brother, Dr. Baedeker, had arrived in the city the day before, and went with me to the official I have named. The following day, accompanied by a Russian lady, who interpreted for us, and whose carriage we filled with Testaments, we began our prison visitation.

Visiting first the large Litofsky prison, we were taken round by the governor. Here I would like to say that I have never met with kinder officials than I have met in the prisons of Russia. They seem to have as much interest in the men as ourselves. 'It does our hearts

good to see you come and visit our men, and give them these books,' said the governor of one prison. As I elsewhere point out, many of the sufferings of the exiles in Siberia are due to corrupt officials; and invariably an honest and conscientious governor has to leave the position, as his life is made intolerable, and he is suspected by the St. Petersburg authorities of favouring the prisoners. But those I have met with were good specimens of prison officials, who were not acting a part to deceive us; for I noticed how the very prisoners themselves were pleased with the company of the man who had to rule them. The matron accompanied us to the ward of the habitual criminals in the women's department, and the hard faces told of a life of sin and sorrow.

None of the inmates were provided with the Word of God, and when we had given Testaments to all who could read (75 per cent.), Dr. Baedeker and I spoke to them of 'Jesus and His love.' These poor people, who had never heard of such love, and who experienced very little of any sort of love, sobbed and wept till the hardened countenances were softened. It seemed as though the tears had worn all the hard lines away, and the story of grace had awakened hope where all seemed dead, and thoughts of a new life, brighter and sweeter and purer, were dawning on their souls. We left them reluctantly, they thanking us as we went, and we thanking God for the power of the 'old, old story' which could soften such hearts and bring tears from the eyes of habitual criminals.

Accompanied by the governor, we visited all the wards and departments,—work being stopped for the time,—while all heard the Gospel of the grace of God fully and freely preached, and the prisoners were all supplied with a copy of the New Testament. The governor had kept one copy, which he said he wanted to give to 'a very bad man,' and whom, he said, 'he wanted us to see and talk to.' He said the man had committed thirty murders; had recently killed a father, mother, and daughter, and had drunk their blood, which, according to their custom,

such men say 'makes them strong'; since he had been brought to this prison he had killed a fellow-prisoner. We entered the cell where he was; spoke to him of his awful crimes; told him that every man he had stabbed had been a stab in his own breast; and then spoke to him of the love of the Saviour, who prayed for His murderers, and who, having died for such as he, loved sinners, and was desirous of saving the worst.

The love of Christ seemed to break this poor criminal down. He softened and listened, till presently the tears began to fall; at last he broke down and wished to confess to us, but we told him that he must go straight to God and confess to Him. Dr. Baedeker read to him the story of the Prodigal Son, and after an interview of over an hour, which was closed with prayer, we left him, after putting into his hand a copy of the Word of God.

This was one day's work, and a sample of what followed; for the next day we went to another large prison and did similar work. How eagerly they listened! how gladly they took the books which we gave them! Truly, as one said, 'It is easy work to feed the hungry.'

My thanks are due to the members of the English-American Church, who were most kind to me. I was enabled to preach there on three Sundays, and would here like to speak of the good work they are doing in St. Petersburg. The hospitality I received, the assistance I experienced, and the help given to me by our English friends, I cannot be too thankful for; specially am I grateful to Mrs. Robertson, secretary of the Society for the Free Distribution of the Scriptures. I was enabled, also, to do a little quiet work in distributing the Word among the drosky-men, who cheerfully accepted the books given them.

Of the prisons themselves I cannot complain; they are far better than others I have visited in Europe; and if those in Siberia were as well kept and managed, there could not have been the outcry which has so startled the civilised world.

My first impressions of *Moscow* were unsatisfactory. The roads are narrow, the streets badly paved and irregular; and the sight of so many thousands of prisoners is most saddening. There was a large party of them on the march, bound for the huge 'Forwarding Prison' of *Moscow*, preparatory to their journey into *Siberia*. At the rear came the weak and sickly, who, unable to walk, were riding on a *tarantas*,—a cart without springs,—and a number of women and children who had elected to go with their relations into *Siberia*, rather than be left behind. The Governor of *Moscow*, Prince *Galitzin*, courteously received us, and gave us the local order, permitting us to enter the prisons.

From the *Bible* *Depôt* we took our Testaments, and a good long drive brought us to the great Forwarding Prison of *Moscow*. We found it was just the time when the friends of the prisoners were permitted to visit them and to say 'good-bye,' possibly for ever. The weary faces of the visitors were more expressive than the appearance of the prisoners; for the latter all wore the prison dress, and their social position could only be guessed; but here were persons well dressed—most intelligent-looking—striving to hide their grief.

One poor lady I particularly noticed hurrying from the doors of the prison—and yet I met her, later in the day, still walking up and down outside the gaol, as though loath to depart from the place that held all she counted dear. We did not enter the prison then, but returned later, and then commenced our distribution of the *Scriptures*.

I was accompanied on this journey by Mr. *George Hilton*, of *St. Petersburg*, who very kindly left his business and translated for me. As we gave away our last *Testament*, the man who would have received the next one said, 'Oh, if there had been *one more*, I should have had it; you have reached me, but you have not one to give me.' We promised to return on the morrow, and bring a fresh stock.

Next morning we took a larger quantity, including copies in Estonian, Finnish, German, and Hebrew. When they were all distributed, I was astonished and alarmed when the governor said, 'I want fifteen hundred more.' I found this prison had 3046 inmates. As we left the place, we heard the 'tramp, tramp, tramp' of yet another body of heavily ironed prisoners, with a similar contingent of sorrow-stricken women and children and sick folk bringing up the rear. Many of the men were dressed in long grey overcoats, with a yellow diamond on the back, while one side of the head was closely shaved, which signified they were bound for Siberia.

The next prison we visited was not so large nor so important a place. It was more like a large ordinary factory than a gaol, and not at all too clean. Moscow prisons do not compare favourably with those of St. Petersburg. In this place we were again privileged to speak words of life to the poor inmates, and to supply them with copies of the Word.

We had now been some days in the city, and began to see the beauties of 'The City of the Forty Forties,' that being the number of the churches, shrines, and holy places which Moscow contains.

Standing on the Kremlin, and gazing out on old Moscow, with its wealth of domes and cupolas (many of them of solid gold), its turrets and towers, its quaint old churches, its picturesque old walls, I thought it was a sight I had never seen the like of. Here was a band of pilgrims from the far East in their quaint costumes; there, some dark-eyed Tartars,—the former bowing down to the ground outside the churches, knocking their foreheads on the very pavement; whilst the latter, busy as itinerant pedlars, had an eye to business rather than religion: altogether it goes to make up such a scene of barbaric splendour as I suppose can be seen nowhere outside Russia. I was amazed at the wealth displayed there. The weight of the gold of the internal decoration of one building (the

Church of the Assumption) is 5 tons 6 cwts. ; whilst the amount of gold used for covering the domes and cupolas is almost fabulous.

Standing on the Sparrow Hills, a few miles out of Moscow, as the sun is setting, and looking on to this sea of churches, resplendent in the glories of the reflecting rays of light, one does not wonder at the exclamations of the French army when they first beheld the city ! I ought, perhaps, here to add that the Kremlin and the old part of Moscow were untouched by the great fire of 1812.

Most of the churches have a large central dome, and at each corner of the building a smaller one, identical in shape, and often surmounted by a cross, under which is the Crescent, which thus adds to the picturesqueness of the scene, and helps to give an Eastern appearance to the place.

We were sad at heart as we thought of the fifteen hundred prisoners we were unable to supply ; my means did not permit me to do as much as this. When I went back to the Bible Depôt, they could only supply me with fifteen more copies of the Testament I had been giving away ; and reluctantly we were obliged to leave these prisoners without giving them what they wished. Inwardly I promised to myself that, if the way were made plain, they should yet have them. Thank God, twelve thousand copies have gone into Siberia for Dr. Baedeker to use among the exiles, besides a few hundreds I sent there. But what are these among so many ? Who is doing the Lord's work among foreign prisoners where there are no Bibles ? Sixteen years I have been writing and trying to stir up God's people ; but who, save Dr. Baedeker, has gone forth from England into this untrodden harvest-field ? Hundreds of people have said to me, 'I so much enjoy your articles in *The Christian* on "Foreign Prisons" ;' but have they ever thought God would have them 'go and do likewise ' ? They have enjoyed reading about the Lord's work ; but have they denied themselves to send a

hundred copies of the Word of the Lord that others might read of His love ?

A few days later we were back in St. Petersburg, and I was surprised to find a letter from the governor of the Litofsky prison, asking me to bring him three hundred and fifty-six more Testaments. The following morning, accompanied by one of our English brethren, I took the books asked for, and Finns, Poles, Germans, and Jews, besides Russians, were supplied. Work was stopped throughout the prison ; about four hundred men gathered in the great yard, where the Gospel was preached, and then the books were distributed ; but, alas ! again we ran out, there being about forty short. These were supplied the next day, through the kindness of Mr. W. Gibson, to whom I feel deeply indebted.

I asked the governor how the murderer already referred to had been behaving since we were there a fortnight before. I was anxious to know if his penitence was real. The governor answered in three words, 'Without a fault.' We went to his cell, and certainly there was a difference in his appearance. He had lost the wild look, and the officials now had no trouble with him. Asked how he was getting on, he replied, 'My sins appal me ; but I hope I am stepping upward. I am hoping in His mercy. Do let me confess my sins to you.' We told him we were not priests, and he 'must go straight to God.' 'Yes, I know,' he answered ; 'but the Book you gave me says, "Confess your faults one to another." ' After a long conversation we left him, having again prayed with him. His sentence was one year in Russia, and eight years' hard labour in Siberia.

Few travellers have visited Siberia, nor have most persons an adequate idea of its extent. It may surprise many to be told that you could put the whole of the United States, and all Europe,—less Russia,—into Siberia, and then have an immense area untouched ; but it is true nevertheless. Russia owns two-thirds of Europe and half of Asia, and the prisons of this vast empire are over-

crowded with thousands of prisoners, and exiles almost beyond number (who have never been tried, but who have been exiled by 'administrative process'). For the most part, these prisoners and exiles are without the knowledge of the true God, and have not the written Word in their possession. Will my readers pray that the Lord of the harvest will thrust out labourers into this almost un-trodden field? Otherwise I see not how the Scripture command can be fulfilled, 'Go ye into *all* the world, and preach the Gospel to *every* creature.'

Whilst at Moscow recently a Christian at whose house I was staying said, 'I missed one of my friends, whom I generally saw every morning, and it was not till after two years had elapsed that he again entered my office, having in appearance aged quite twenty years. He told me the following story: "I was arrested one morning, taken to the fortress on the Neva, put into a cell which measured three asheens by two,—that is, seven feet by four feet eight inches,—very damp, and having a small window above my head. For the first three months I was able to climb up to the window to get a little air, but afterwards I became too weak to do so. Here I was kept for two years without leaving my dungeon, and now I am permitted to come home for three days previous to being exiled to Siberia. The horrors of those two years are still with me, and whilst in my cell I could hear every hour the bells of the fortress ringing out 'God save the Emperor.' I know no reason why I was thus imprisoned, and know not why I am thus exiled."

The brother of this exile, I also learned, was about to be married, but on the eve of his wedding was arrested, without trial thrown into the fortress, kept there for some time, and then also exiled to Siberia. My friend Mr. G— asked if he knew any reason why he had been arrested. He said, 'No, unless it were that about twenty years ago I was in a University riot.'

Irkutsk, one of the principal prisons of Siberia, was built to hold four hundred and fifty, but it is a well-known

fact that it has often contained seventeen hundred prisoners. One shirt is given to each man every six months, and a great-coat every year. Exiles on the march have to mix with the criminals and sleep in the same prisons.

One such exile, with his wife—a cultured lady—and baby boy twelve months old, were marching to Irkutsk in a terribly cold storm, and reached the prison only to find the child frozen to death in the mother's arms. The wife, at the sight of the dead babe, went raving mad; 'and yet,' said the husband, 'though my wife was mad and my child dead, they left me in the courtyard of Irkutsk prison with the thermometer at thirty degrees below zero, waiting for half an hour to be officially received.' These are but drops in the ocean of human misery endured by exiles and prisoners in the vast Russian Empire. Add to such sorrows the fact that they seldom, if ever, hear of the love of Jesus; and, unless God's Word is sent them, they will die without ever reading of Him who came 'to give deliverance to the captive.' Let the Church of God be found at least praying, 'Let the sighing of the prisoners come before Thee,' and those who are able say, 'I have given them Thy Word.'

I here add a few facts which speak for themselves.

In January 1884 there were in European Russia 73,796 prisoners, whilst the aggregate prison capacity was only 54,253; hence overcrowding and disease were the results. Russia's Penal Code is supposed to be abolished, but you may still read in the revised edition of 1857, page 799, that convicts may be punished by five to six thousand strokes of the whip, and by being riveted to a wheelbarrow for terms varying from one to three years. Here is a case of Russian justice. The peasant Borunoff came to St. Petersburg on behalf of his fellow-villagers, to bring a complaint to the Czar against the authorities, and he was tried as a 'rebel.' He was acquitted by the Court, but re-arrested on the very flight of steps outside, and exiled to Kola. A Russian newspaper (the *Russkaya Ryech* for January 1882) tells of an insubordinate prisoner who was

kept for nine months in solitary confinement in a dark cell ; and who came out all but blind, and mad. At Byelgorod prisoners were kept for three to five years in solitary confinement, and in irons, in dark, damp cells, that measured only ten feet by six. The daily allowance of the Crown being five farthings a day, they received only bread and water, and three times a week a small bowl of poor soup. Ten minutes' walk in the yard was allowed every second day. No bed, no sort of pillow, nothing to cover them, they slept on the bare floor, with some of their clothes under their heads, wrapped in the prisoner's grey cloak. One hundred and sixty-five thousand prisoners were transported to Siberia in ten years, and Russia continues to send there FOR LIFE large numbers of prisoners who, in other countries, would be condemned simply to a fine or short imprisonment. According to official reports, no less than a thousand convicts died of scurvy at the Kara gold mines, in 1857, in the course of a single summer, and dreadful were the scenes constantly witnessed in this part of Eastern Siberia. Large numbers of those who are sent to Siberia are political prisoners, and many of those who are here exiled for life have been imprisoned for no other crime than their being Nonconformists to the Established Church ; and despite the fact that they are now conveyed part of the way by rail and river, many have to walk over four thousand miles, taking them two years to reach their prison-homes in far-away Siberia. And this is the country, and these the prisons, that a certain Englishman has tried to represent under a smiling aspect ; while, for twenty years, all honest men in Russia have been loudly crying out against the prisons, and loudly asking for an immediate reform. Who can wonder that men like Prince Krapotkine are revolutionists against a country that so treats thousands of her subjects ! Surely our sympathies should be with these so-called criminals, rather than with the system that so ill-treats them.

A poor woman in a Siberian prison, who escaped from the horrors of that place, and traversed two thousand

weary miles, reached the home of her mother, and was retaken with her hand upon the latch of the door. They said to her, 'What do you mean by escaping?' 'Oh,' said she, '*I did so want to see my mother!*' Two thousand miles she had travelled and escaped from the hands of her warders, there only to be retaken as her hand was upon the latch of her mother's door. Oh! what will not the love for a mother do?

Another of the faults which I trust the Russian Government will have mended is the overcrowding of the prisons. Many prisons are old, or old-fashioned, and are as filthy as they can be, and infested with vermin. On the march exiles are mixed up with criminals; refined ladies, students from the universities, and murderers, are all mixed up together. They have no tarpaulins to cover them, and if it rains all day they have to sleep in their wet clothes. How they wash their clothes I don't know. A friend who has been for six months in a tarantas said, 'I was never free from vermin for four months.' I know for a fact that one of the governors, who was a good sort of a man, seeing that there were four times the number of criminals that were expected, found he had not a change of clothes for them. The result was there were more vermin than clothes on the people. He wrote to St. Petersburg telling the authorities the state of affairs, and said, 'For Heaven's sake, send us some more clothes.' Six months passed, and he received no answer. Then he called a convict, and he said, 'Take off your clothes.' He had that mass of lice and rags packed up into a parcel, and sent it to St. Petersburg. They opened it. When they saw what it was and how it was, they acted, and sent the required clothes.

I have reasons to believe that the authorities are well aware that things are not as they should be. There are good men in the Russian prison system and there are bad men, but the system wants altering. I wish I might have seen the Czar personally. I don't think he knows all that goes on. I would ask him to repeal that act which says that a man may be imprisoned and exiled without trial,

Records were kept of a thousand who were exiled, and only a hundred and ninety-three of them were ever tried. How false and how wrong is the system that puts a man in prison for three years without trial, and then gives him what he only deserved at first—two months' imprisonment !



CHAPTER XIII.

HOLLAND, GERMANY, DENMARK, AND SWEDEN IN 1891.

SOME ten years ago I visited Holland, and was struck by the cleanliness of the cities I saw. Every householder seemed careful to wash down the front of his shop and pathway daily, whilst the bargees on the many canals vied with each other in making their boats as bright and clean as possible. Everybody to-day appears most industrious. Even the dogs are made to work ; sometimes two or three are seen harnessed together, pulling a good-sized cart, containing, besides goods, one of the quaintly attired peasants, in her silver headdress and gilt ornaments, with white lace cap.

Most persons in Holland smoke, even the Roman Catholic priests. This leads me to remark the evident growth of Roman Catholicism in this Protestant country. I have been careful to make inquiry concerning this, and have learned that it is so. Rome has been careful to make her services bright, musical, and interesting, and specially attractive to the young. In contrast to this, the sermons in the national Dutch churches are sometimes an hour and a half long, and, I judge, as dry as they are lengthy. Evidently Holland has retrograded during the past twenty years. The authorities seem very much afraid of offending either the Romanists or the Jews, and allow the Opera House and the theatres to be open here on the Lord's Day evening. We naturally look for these things in a Popish country, but it surely bodes ill for the Protestant nation that permits those places to be open on the Day of Rest.

Of the prison system of Holland I cannot speak too highly. In some respects I think it excels our own; for instance, the 'cellulaire' system in many prisons is strictly enforced. The prisoner is in separate confinement the whole term of his imprisonment; he works alone, exercises alone, sleeps alone, and never sees another prisoner. This is not to say he is kept in solitary confinement without seeing anybody. He is visited regularly by the governor, the doctor, the warder, and the chaplain, and every fortnight a visitor, not belonging to the prison, but officially authorised, will see him, and listen to any complaint he may make. By this means there is no danger of one prisoner being contaminated by another. At the trial of a prisoner, if the judge deems the offence worthy of 'ten years' imprisonment with hard labour,' he may give him 'four years' cellulaire,' which is reckoned to be the equivalent of the above sentence.

I have (accompanied by my wife) just been over the large 'cellulaire' prison of this city, and found its inmates industriously occupied in making chairs, mats, tinware, and other articles of every-day use. Every cell (excepting those containing Catholic prisoners) contained a Bible and (without exception) another book, which we might do well to supply our prisoners with. I refer to the very valuable book by Dr. Richardson, entitled 'The People's Instructions about Alcohol.' Besides these, I saw in one cell at least nine other books. I cannot speak highly of the food, which is far inferior to the diet provided for our convicts. Yet the men appeared in good health and cheerful spirits.

The same system applies to the women's department of the same prison—with the exception of the very old prisoners, and these were allowed to work together during the day. The cleanliness which so marks this country is very noticeable in the prisons also, and we left the place wishing all such places were equally clean, and all prisoners as well cared for spiritually.

In visiting other prisons at the Hague and Amsterdam

I noticed some flowers in one cell, whilst another prisoner was permitted to have a bird in a cage. At the Hague prison, in the room of the Minister of Justice, there is a portrait of Elizabeth Fry, also a letter written by her.

Utrecht is built on the banks of the Rhine, and has been the scene of notable events. Here one of the first Christian churches was established by Dagobert, and here the different Powers met and settled the ever-memorable treaty, which, among other things, secured the Protestant Succession in England, and the separation of the French and Spanish crowns. Here in the prison I noticed some plants growing in the cells, and also some cut flowers,—a favour which I think must be very humanising to a prisoner, and restraining also.

On our way here we stayed at Brussels, and I was pleased to find among the many to whom I gave copies of the Scriptures some seven or eight years ago one who had profited by the reading of the New Testament. A strict Catholic, an observer of all the fast days, and yet open to be taught, I bade him read God's Word, and he would then need less of the teaching of the priest. He now tells me he 'never sees the priest'; that his 'only trust is in the Lord who died for him'; his family never 'go to confession,' and he has 'a calm, restful feeling' he never knew before.

GERMANY AND DENMARK.

Twelve hours' journey from Holland brought us to the beautiful city of Hamburg, the Elbe running along its southern side, and the magnificent Alster Lake in the centre of it. Here we rested over the Lord's Day, which gave us an opportunity of seeing what we could of the Lord's work in this important port of Germany.

At eleven o'clock we attended the English Reformed Church, and listened to an able address by the Rev. J. D. Kilburn, which was simple in its delivery, sound in its

doctrine, and sweet to our taste. The afternoon seemed quite given over by the people to amusement and recreation. Pushing our way through quite a fair, with roundabouts and swings, we were taken by our friend mentioned above to the Sailors' Rest, established some ten years ago by Mr. Reginald Radcliffe. It is in a flourishing condition, meetings are held regularly, and 'rest for the weary' in the highest sense has been offered and accepted by many sailors, both German and English.

A service was advertised at the Sailors' Institute, but after reaching the place on the quay at three o'clock we found no one present. About one in forty is the average attendance at the places of worship here, whilst Socialism is very busy with its propaganda.

After the preaching in the above church in the evening we were glad to get back to the quiet of our hotel, and felt grateful to God for the simple, faithful testimony of Mr. Kilburn in this city. He was formerly the minister of an English church in St. Petersburg, the pulpit of which is now ably filled by Rev. Alex. Francis.

The next day brought us to Kiel, the boundary of the German Empire on the north, and the following morning we were steaming over the blue waters of the Baltic on our way to the Danish coast. So peaceful was the picture, and perfect the scene, that we were sorry almost when our short voyage of seventy miles was finished, and Korsor, in Denmark, was reached. By ten o'clock we had reached Copenhagen, and the next day prepared to see what provision this country makes to meet the spiritual needs of her criminal population.

Having introductions to Mr. W. Wright, that gentleman took us to a midday meeting which he has carried on for some time among the women and girls engaged in the making of cigars. Descending to the ground-floor of the same building we found ourselves in the comfortable Sailors' Home, where Mr. Wright and a colleague conducted a service among seamen.

I was glad to find that my conductor has been preaching

in the open air for some years, having originated the 'Courtyard Mission.'

Having visited Professor Goos, the Director of Prisons, that gentleman gave me the required permission to visit the prisons. Accompanied by my wife and Mr. Wright, we went to the prison for women, and were courteously received by the governor, who conducted us over the gaol. On entering the kitchen we saw two young girls—both under *life sentences*. A few kind words of hope and cheer brought tears to the eyes of both, and then their hearts seemed open to hear of One who loved them, and whose Gospel would give them peace. We left them with hopes and prayers that our brief visit may have been at least a ray of sunshine across the darkness of their lives.

The 'cellulaire' system is in operation here, as well as the principle of 'association,' but, as in Holland, the judge, when sentencing the prisoner, instead of giving 'six years' association,' would only sentence the culprit to 'three years and a-half,' provided it was to be on the 'cellulaire' system.

We visited cell after cell and ward after ward, in every case speaking to the prisoners when alone, and where we found a number together we held an informal meeting. Mr. Wright had brought with him a large scroll of hymns in large type, and by holding it up all could see to sing, save that their tears hindered them. This went on all the morning, and not till all the prison was visited did we stop. Making inquiries we found that two-thirds of the prisoners were not supplied with copies of the Word of God, and I promised to bring enough to supply those who were not thus provided; but the governor suggested that if I gave a copy to all who were in the prison, then on their release they would be able to take it away with them as a souvenir. To this I agreed, and, as we left the place, at once went to the Bible Society and bought enough books to supply all, and which were to be sent to the hotel for us to take to the prison.

At least 25 per cent. of the prisoners were there for the crime of infanticide, which speaks loudly for the need of the 'Midnight Mission' of this city—another of the many good works begun by the friend whose name I have mentioned. He, with others, spends much time in talking to 'fallen men.' I could but think, as we moved about among dozens of young girls in this prison, many under a *life sentence*, whether the partners in their sin should not, at least, have been obliged to bear half their sentence.

We were much encouraged by the impression made by the Gospel—the singing specially; the tears that invariably followed told of their sorrow for the past, and the confession of some that they desired to begin a new life encouraged us in this work.

COPENHAGEN.

The association of habitual criminals with younger prisoners has long been acknowledged to be a mistake by those who know anything of the treatment of offenders against the law. In England a convict is supposed, in the preliminary stage, to be kept quite alone; but this is never practically the case. He meets his fellows in the exercising yard, in the chapel, and other places; and 'old lags' have many ways of communicating with others who are less depraved, and thus bring contamination to a young man who is 'doing' his first sentence of 'five years'—say for stealing the contents of a letter.

Having just returned from a convict prison where the inmates serve all their term under the 'cellulaire' system, and where they are supposed never to see the face of a fellow-prisoner, I am able to speak of a system which is somewhat new to me. Few men can stand solitary confinement for even a few years without their reason being impaired. The French authorities affirm that a sentence of 'ten years' is 'sure to drive a prisoner mad.' In

this country three and a-half years' 'cellulaire' counts as six years in 'association.'

A few miles' drive brought us to Vridslöselille, where the gaol is situated, and the governor took us over the whole building. No youths under fifteen can be kept in solitary confinement, but are allowed to work together. All the others were at work at different trades, and before I had concluded my tour of inspection I no longer wondered how men could be kept in close confinement for years, and yet retain their mental balance and even spirits. Strict and rigorous as are the rules, yet there is a most humane spirit infused into the system, which gives hope to the prisoner, and must tend to keep him from despair; for instance, after the first three months he is able to earn a few pence daily, part of which he may spend in different ways, and the rest is given to him when released, so that he may have several pounds to begin life afresh, and the little luxuries which he may have earned have helped to make 'life worth living,' even in a prison. We were also made aware of the thoughtfulness of the authorities, by noticing that from all the small yards where the prisoners take their daily walks for exercise—being allowed two half-hours each day—flower gardens are in sight, and this must be a welcome change from the monotony of a whitewashed cell.

Should a convict be taken ill, he is at once removed to a large and comfortable room, and adjoining this is a smaller room, where the prisoner's wife or sister may come and stay and attend to the sick man. The walls of the rooms were coloured, the floors carpeted and comfortably furnished, and when we asked to be allowed to bring in some texts for the walls, the governor said we might bring fifty to be hung up in different parts of the gaol; it was, however, thought better to use Scripture rolls, so that there should be portions for every day. As we entered the different cells the governor always raised his hat, which I thought an act calculated to awaken and

maintain some self-respect in the mind of the prisoner, without which there can be little hope of real reform.

In one cell I found the son of a colonel. He had travelled a good deal, spoke English fluently, and appeared more cheerful than most men in a similar condition. I ventured to ask him if his trouble had made him think ; and said that 'trouble is often the means of bringing us to God.' In reply he said, 'Yes ; I am sure my trouble has been of great use to me. It has brought my life to God ; and though my health is not good, because the food does not agree with me, yet I am contented.' On speaking to the governor concerning him, he went back to his cell, and promised to have his diet changed ; and the prisoner's joy seemed complete when I promised him I would see his wife, who resides at Stockholm, and tell her he was getting on all right, and would be leaving prison in about eight months.

Singular to say, the next cell I entered contained a man who also spoke to me in English, and with him I had a very profitable talk, and am more than ever convinced of the power of *words*. When Mrs. Cook and I visited the prison for women, we invariably noticed that it was not the words spoken concerning their wrong-doing, but the words of kindness which followed, that seemed to break them down. These poor fallen ones know that they have sinned, and that they deserve their punishment ; but I am not so sure that they know that 'the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort' loveth such sinners, and that our Lord still says to them, 'Come unto Me.'

How true are the words :—

For many a shaft at random sent
Finds mark the archer little meant ;
And many a word at random spoken
May wound or soothe a heart that's broken.

And if this be so, how much more likely when spoken with the hope and intention of being used by God 'to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives.' Very specially did we notice this when talking

to those who had become mothers since they had been imprisoned.

They are allowed to have their babies with them till they are one year old ; then they are taken to the workhouse until the sentence of the mother has expired.

But to return to the prison for men, of which I am now writing. As we passed across one of the flower gardens, the governor pointed to one of the top windows of the prison and said, 'A little while ago a man broke out of the place through that window ; after tearing out of their sockets the iron bars, he made his way on to the roof by climbing the gutter pipe ; from the roof he descended the front of the prison by the same means, and was only caught two days afterwards whilst in the act of stealing in Copenhagen.' This escape is all the more remarkable from the fact that a number of dogs patrol the prison yards with warders, day and night, and are trained to catch those who attempt to escape. Strong, powerful, and noisy brutes they appeared to us to be ; yet though they have caught many who have attempted to run away, they have never been known to bite a man, but invariably throw him down and stand over him barking. Certainly I must admit that there is much to admire in the treatment of criminals in this gaol ; the system is strict and severe, but it is blended with care and thoughtfulness ; and when we had finished our tour of the place, having spent some hours in careful inspection, I only found one thing to complain of, and which demands instant attention. We had observed that the bed-clothes in the cells, and the mattresses, appeared somewhat dirty, and on examining them more closely we found them worse than filthy. The governor informed us that the sheets were changed *once in six weeks*, and said, 'It will be a pleasure to me if you can get it altered.' I found that the excuse had been 'the expense it would entail,' and I suggested that the prisoners themselves might wash them, but the answer was, 'Ah ! but we have not enough sheets at present to change them often !'

STOCKHOLM.

Beautifully situated amidst the hundreds of islands by which it is surrounded is the fair capital of Sweden. The beauties of its environs are only seen when one explores its many waterways, and sails on its lovely lakes. But it was not to see nature in its beauty that we had come thus far on our journey: it was rather to see the dark side of human nature, as exhibited in the criminal population, and to seek to minister the true and only remedy—viz., to present 'Christ and Him crucified' to those who have fallen by their sins.

His Majesty King Oscar had graciously sent word to the director to receive me, and to permit me access to all the prisons. Before long I was hard at work, seeking to bring the light of the Gospel to dark human hearts. God has singularly guided and blessed our efforts among the fallen ones of this city. Remembering my promise to the prisoner at Copenhagen that I would visit his wife and tell her of my visit to him, I inquired of Mrs. Anderson Mierjelm where I should find the street where she lived. She answered, 'Some few months ago I found a poor woman who had no home nor food, and who had once been better off. I obtained work for her, found a home for her, and she has recently been converted and is now a bright Christian, and her only trouble is that she has a husband who is in prison, and who she fears will be worse after his imprisonment than before; but she is praying daily for his conversion.' On telling her the name of my prisoner, she said, 'That is the name of the woman I have been helping.' We found that the Lord had blessed the man while in prison, and the wife while in her sorrow and trouble. It is impossible to describe the scene when I told her, on visiting her, of her husband's repentance. We saw her several times, and her mouth was full of praise to God.

My first visit was to the convict prison on Longholmen

(Long Island), where some four hundred men were confined, fifty-six of whom were for life. This may mean, the governor informed us, anything between twelve and twenty-five years. The present Minister of Justice leans towards twenty-five years, but the law concerning this is at present in a very transitional state. Surely, if reform is the object the authorities have in view, and not merely punishment, then the good desires aimed at are lost, for after twenty-five years men come forth broken down in health and enfeebled in mind. The system in Sweden is not strictly 'cellulaire,' but partly so, and the governor informed us that while they were kept by themselves they were impressible and open to improvement, but the moment they were in association with others all the good work of improving them was undone, and they became as bad as ever. Yet in her present manner of dealing with her prisoners I do not see what else Sweden can do, as there is lacking in her system the many thoughtful and humane measures which are carried out in Denmark, and at present those whom I visited here, who had been in solitary confinement for one and two years only, are in danger of losing their reason.

There were many things to admire in this gaol, but there was much to depress one. The first man I visited was suffering from the effects of his crime. He had murdered his two children, was condemned 'for life,' and in the solitude of his cell had brooded over his sins, till his agony of soul was terrible to see. When spoken to of God's mercy, he replied, 'Ah! but they were my own children.' When told of Jesus' blood, he said, 'Yes, it may be true for others, not for me.' No ray of hope seemed to reach him, and we had to leave him—a terrible picture of what sin does. I feel certain that if the grace of God does not reach his soul, the man will lose his reason shortly.

Our next visit was also to a murderer. The governor had spoken to us of one very dangerous case. He was a Finn, and it was hardly deemed advisable to go to him;

but I persuaded him to take me to his cell. After saluting him, I asked him if 'he knew that Christ died for *him*, and that God loved *him*.' Whether he failed to understand the question, or whether his solitary confinement had injured his mind, I know not; he looked at me with a dazed look, which proved that complete solitude, with nothing to ameliorate or mitigate its horror, must tend to drive some men mad. Our conductor even said to us, 'I think he is not right in his head, he sometimes does such strange things.' I was surprised, when in Denmark, at one particular crime; here we were alarmed and shocked, for 35 per cent. of the births are illegitimate. Hundreds of women are in prison for infanticide, and I fear morality is at a very low ebb.

Many of the women (or rather girls) for the above crime are sentenced to three or four years' imprisonment only; and one's first feelings are that a more severe sentence would be more just, and likely to deter others from a similar crime; but after careful inquiry of the authorities, and visiting some hundreds of such persons in company with Mrs. Anderson and my wife, besides holding services in the prisons, my more mature judgment is, that in many cases the sentence is sufficient; but I could wish that the greater part were borne, not by the poor girls, but by the wretched men who have been the cause of all the sorrow and the sin.

The Queen of Sweden has a Home for discharged women, and I had the privilege there also of setting forth Christ as the Saviour from sin. Evidences were not wanting of the deep penitence and contrition of some present. The Home is only one of the many good works in which her Majesty is engaged.

The following day was Sunday. At 10.30 we were at Fort Waxholm, where it was arranged by the authorities I was to preach. It being a beautiful, warm day and the prison rather stuffy, I proposed we should hold the meeting in the open air, and this was agreed to. The organ having been brought out, the friends who had accompanied me

and the officers gathered round, and we were soon in the midst of a Gospel service.

At 4.30 we were back in the city, and taking the service for women at the city prison. I was aware that nearly all the prisoners who were listening to me were mothers who had killed their infants; some of them were under 'life sentences,' but they were unlike in appearance to any other class of criminals I have previously seen. Most of them were young, with frank, open countenances, and one could hardly believe that there were over a hundred and fifty of these in the congregation who had taken the lives of their children. Certainly there was nothing of the hardened criminal look about these poor young girls. The director of the prison told us that they were not like the ordinary criminals, that many of them were deeply penitent, but that on finding they had been betrayed by the men who had deceived them (often under promise of marriage), and that their parents' doors were closed upon them, they had in bitter shame and disappointment committed the rash act which had brought them here. While speaking I happened to say, 'I suppose *some* of you can say that your sins are forgiven?' 'Yes, yes, yes,' came from many of my congregation. When the Saviour's invitation was given, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden,' sobs and tears evidenced that the Lord was bringing wanderers home.

At six o'clock we began another service among other prisoners in another gaol, where many of them were bad women, but even here the love of Christ found many a response. I should have said that at the first service over forty girls asked us to pray for them. At 7.30 we held our closing meeting for the day at the Y.W.C.A., and here we enjoyed the presence of the Lord in a crowded meeting.

I am sorry to add that Rome is very busy in Denmark and Sweden; surely and steadily the Papacy seems to be encroaching on these hitherto favoured lands. May the Lord rebuke the enemy.

CHAPTER XIV.

FINLAND.

BEAUTIFUL, indeed, is the journey by water from Sweden to Finland, and specially so if you cross from Stockholm to Abo. For nearly six hours the steamer threads its way through countless islands of all sizes, magnificently wooded; on these are built the summer residences of the well-to-do folks of Stockholm, most of whom have telephonic communication with the city. Then come some two hours' open sea, which is generally calm, and then the Finnish Isles are reached. After six or seven hours' pleasant steaming you reach Finland, sorry that your enjoyable journey is so quickly over. Waiting to meet us was our friend, the Baroness Wrede, a lady who, for the past seven years and a-half, has devoted all her time to visiting the prisons of Finland. She is permitted to go into all the prisons, and speak to and pray with all or any of the prisoners at any time.

At the Prison Congress, held at St. Petersburg in June 1890, she was the only lady delegate. During the Conference, after many speakers had said that 'some fresh system was needed to effect the reformation of criminals, and that hitherto many ways and means had failed,' the Baroness rose and bore witness to what she herself had known and seen. Where the laws and rules of men had failed, she had invariably seen that God's grace and the Saviour's love, when simply preached by loving hearts, have changed hardened criminals, effecting a real and lasting reform. Applause followed the brief speech, and

several leading gentlemen thanked the lady for her courage and her words.

At Abo we found the most important convict prison of Finland, and on the following morning the Baroness arranged for me to hold a special service in the prison church. At 11.30 we found 453 men assembled, out of whom 286 were undergoing life sentences. Our lady friend opened and closed the meeting with prayer, and I need hardly say that I sought help to preach the Gospel of the grace of God as simply and freely as possible. The laws still in force against crime have been in operation for a hundred and fifty years, and when I say that if a man steals anything of the value of £8, and has been convicted twice before, he is sentenced 'for life,' my readers will perhaps see the need of a change in this respect. For the first and second offences of stealing, the culprit gets only twenty-eight days, but for the third offence 'for life.' The new laws have been passed and signed by the Emperor, but the Russian Press spoke out loudly against them, and in a moment of weakness the Emperor withdrew his name, and so the old order still reigns. After visiting a second prison we went back to see the prisoners at work, and were pleased at the order and cleanliness that prevailed.

It is one of the best and strongest prisons I ever saw, and yet the noted criminal, Harpoja, whose name is a terror in the country, has succeeded in breaking out. In fact, the prison is a stronghold of granite, and yet this man got out no fewer than four times, and managed to escape from Siberia once. He has been 'condemned to death' many times, and is at present confined in Tavastehus Gaol, heavily ironed. At his last trial he was chained to the wall of the court, the judge insisting on the Baroness sitting between him and the prisoner. This was in October 1890; a month previously she had first visited him, and was repulsed again and again. Continuing, however, she eventually won her way to his heart, and then, as she says, 'His agony of soul under conviction

of sin was terrible to see ; for hours he trembled and shook, until tears came to his relief,' and then she was able to point him to One who was 'mighty to save.' Two days before his trial he was enabled to accept Christ as his Saviour, and his behaviour in court was so different from what had been expected that everybody was astonished. For the past six months he has been a 'new creature'; but, to use his own words, 'Though I am assured God has forgiven me, yet, as I think of my past life, I feel *I can never smile again.*'

The following day we reached Tavastehus, and drove to the prison where Harpoja is confined. Admitted to his cell, we saw a man of herculean build, with strongly marked features, and with a face expressive of force and determination. In conversation we found him to be a well-read man, of good intellect, and far advanced in Christian life and experience. Next morning at 11.30 we held a service for women in the prison church. There was a large audience and attentive hearers, and if sobs and bowed heads were tokens of broken hearts and contrite spirits, then the Saviour was again seeking out the lost sheep and bringing them into the fold. On inquiry we were informed that a hundred and thirty of those present were imprisoned for infanticide. On inspecting the wards in which the prisoners slept, we found them very close and dark. The prison is an old one, and the ventilation sadly defective. Mentioning this to the director, we learned that there had already been twenty-six deaths this year. Next morning we visited other prisoners in whom the Baroness is interested, two of whom gave evidence of their conversion to God ; and one, a backslider, appeared slightly sceptical. We were glad to find that the authorities supply all prisoners, except those with very short sentences, with the New Testament ; while our friend supplies every converted man with a Bible, and gives to every discharged prisoner a New Testament. I was glad to be able to leave with her a good supply of these books.

Leaving Tavastehus, we took train for Helsingfors, the

capital, and on our way stopped at a station, where the quick eye of the prisoners' friend saw the prison van attached to a train just coming in. To visit the men she at once got on to the train, and there learnt that a prisoner had died in the night at a small station. A room is provided at some stations where the men stay for the night. At this particular place there was only accommodation for four, but ten had been pushed in, and among them the poor dying man ; and what made the case seem harder, he was being taken to another prison to be discharged, having served all his sentence. There is a proverb in Finland that 'Prisoners have only two friends, God in heaven and the Baroness on earth.'

On reaching Helsingfors, and having rested all night, we went to see the Director-General of Prisons, and complained of the badly-ventilated gaol at Tavastehus, and of the carelessness in connection with the poor man who died. He promised that these things should be inquired into. At five o'clock on Sunday arrangements were made for me to preach in the large convict prison. None of the men were sentenced to more than five years, and all were described as being very bad. The Baroness opened with prayer, and speaking from the text, 'This Man receiveth sinners,' I sought to bring home conviction of their wrong-doing, and also told them of Him of whom 'tis said, 'Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people *from* their sins.' The chaplain closed with prayer, and our gaol-birds went back to their cages, I trust to think over the message they had heard. Finland is called 'the land of a thousand lakes,' but I had been too busy in my work to see any of its peculiar beauties.



CHAPTER XV.

R U S S I A R E V I S I T E D .

LEAVING Helsingfors, the capital of Finland, after a most enjoyable service in the prison church, we arrived at St. Petersburg the next day, and found our friends at the station waiting to welcome us.

Here I also met a friend, who, since my visit to Russia last year, had been travelling in Siberia; and I was anxious to hear from him the exact conditions of the prisons there. He had been travelling with a friend who had permission to visit the prisons, had been as far into the interior as Omsk, and had seen all the prisons and prisoners between Moscow and the above-named town. I was glad to hear that in some of the places visited there had been attempts to remedy the dirt and overcrowding which has been described by several writers. In Tobolsk the prison is clean and well-kept. When I asked whether things were as bad as they have been described by a well-known American writer, the answer was, 'Yes, it is quite true, not at all over-coloured'; in fact, the governor at one prison said to me, 'I've bombarded the Minister at St. Petersburg with petitions to alter the state of affairs, but all to no purpose'; and from my own personal knowledge of Tieumain it is filthy, and overcrowded so that prisoners

are sleeping in all the corridors. As I stepped down into the dungeon-like place, where some seventy men were imprisoned, I could see nothing at first by reason of the yellow, fog-like vapour which filled the place, and made me gasp for breath ; and as this was in the depth of winter, I wondered what it could be like in the summer. The room appeared to be about twenty feet by fifteen : no bed-clothes are provided. They sleep at night on wooden shelves, which run round the place ; and this is but a specimen of many other such places I have seen.

Some persons have endeavoured to deny the wretched condition of the imprisoned thousands of Siberia, but here is fresh evidence by an impartial witness. He was able to give away some thousands of copies of Gospels to the prisoners whom he met whilst journeying through the vast empire of Siberia. While some little improvement has been effected, no doubt through the notice which the Press has taken of the vile conditions under which these poor creatures exist, we trust that the authorities will be led speedily to remedy the worst of these pestilential evils.

The excuse given is that 'there is no money to meet the expense of building new prisons.' Since I have been in Russia this time I have visited a few of the many palaces and other palatial buildings belonging to the Imperial family, and as I have walked through the gorgeous rooms of the palaces of Peterhof and Tsarskey, to say nothing of Gatchina and the Winter Palace, and have looked upon the trappings of the royal carriages, one of which vehicles is ornamented with diamonds and rubies throughout the whole of the interior, I could have wished that I had the power to exchange a fraction of this fabulous wealth into money, and be allowed to erect roomy and sanitary prisons for these subjects of the Czar. I was able whilst in Sweden to send on four hundred Testaments to Siberia for the use of some Finns and Swedes who are there imprisoned, and where there is one of their own countrymen who is licensed to go among them and preach to them.

Scarcely had I reached St. Petersburg when a friend from Moscow called at the house where I was staying, and as he was returning home by the courier train the same night, I elected to go with him ; and leaving Mrs. Cook in the care of my friends, we were soon *en route* for the old capital. Here I found no difficulty in again getting entrance to the prisons. Prince Galitzin received me in audience, and said, 'We have seven prisons here ; one contains *four thousand*, another two thousand, and the smaller ones less.' The roads in Moscow are simply execrable, rough cobbles most unequally laid, the drivers the most careless in the world, and though last year I escaped the dangers of the road, this time I met with an accident and was thrown from the drosky, but fortunately without much harm coming to me. The first batch of three hundred prisoners for this season had just left Moscow. I was sorry to have missed them ; by this time they have crossed the frontier, and are on their weary march to some distant part of Siberia. The expulsion of the poor Jews was in full swing, and by night they were being ordered off literally by hundreds.

One's heart sickens, and one's courage almost fails, on seeing the bitter persecution going on daily, not only against the Jews, but even against those who are our own brethren in the faith. On reaching the large prison of Moscow,—through which all prisoners bound for Siberia must pass,—we entered the gloomy doors, and, while waiting for the appearance of the governor, were surprised to hear some very melodious singing ; it was a number of the convicts who had good voices, and who usually sang for the benefit of their fellow-sufferers. Corridor after corridor was visited, the men standing two deep on each side of us, as, walking down between them, we scattered the precious seed of God's Word among them, giving to each prisoner a New Testament. 'For God's sake, give me one of those books,' said one man, as we passed by to get a fresh supply. Having supplied him, we went to the next gallery above, and did not rest until all who

were going to Siberia were supplied with Testaments. It is the largest prison I ever saw, and the most depressing scene I ever witnessed.

To each corridor of men I spoke a few words of hope and cheer; and bade them read the book which had proved so great a blessing to myself, and they would find it told of One who had been the 'Man of sorrows,' and who was now the 'Friend of publicans and sinners.' I felt how little could be done in this vast and needy field. Tens of thousands pass through Moscow on their way to the interior, and very truly might many of them say, 'No man careth for our souls.'

It is painful to hear of the sorrows, miseries, and afflictions of the Jews; for while we were staying in Moscow hundreds were being banished by the authorities, whilst our sympathies were aroused, and our indignation kindled, as scores of cases came to our knowledge where our brethren in Christ were also suffering. The following is a cutting from the *Daily News*, published while I was in Moscow:—

'Of all the scandalous deeds lately perpetrated within the Czar's dominions, by far the worst is that now reported from Courland. Three Protestant clergyman, named Treu, Krause, and Eisenschmidt, were prosecuted for having urged their parishioners to remain faithful to the Evangelical Church. The first tribunal appealed to acquitted them. They were then tried on the same charge before a higher court, which likewise declared them innocent of all infraction of the law. Frantic at being thus baffled in their iniquitous endeavours to secure the condemnation of the three unlucky clergymen, the supreme ecclesiastical authorities at St. Petersburg put the matter before the Senate. The result was that Pastors Treu and Krause were sentenced to eight months' imprisonment, while Pastor Eisenschmidt was banished to Tomsk, the most desolate district of Siberia. He was the father of eight children. Driven to despair by the prospect of exile, he has committed suicide by taking poison. Pastors Treu

and Krause, trusting to the clemency of the Czar, addressed a petition to his Majesty, praying for a remittance of their unjust sentence. Instead of that, however, the Czar added to their punishment by forbidding them ever again to exercise their ecclesiastical functions in the Baltic provinces.'

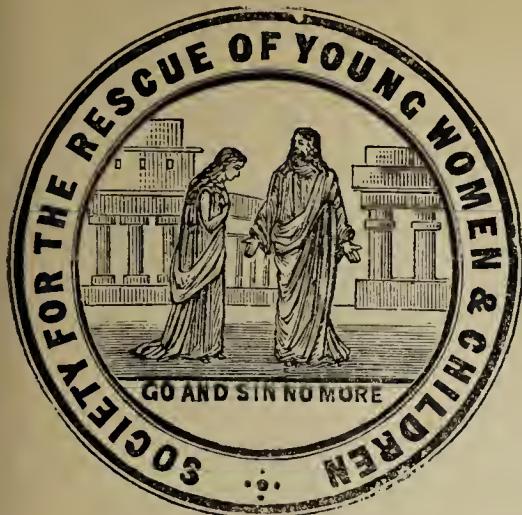
Hurrying back to St. Petersburg, I was soon busy in the work there. On inquiry in one of the gaols where I had met with one noted murderer last year, who had given evident tokens of repentance, I was glad to hear that, during the seven months which he passed there before being sent to Siberia, his life had been most exemplary. In this particular prison I only found one man whom I recognised from my previous visit. All had apparently been either transferred to other prisons or been discharged, and those whom I now found were very pleased to accept the books I gave them. No fault is to be found with the prisons of St. Petersburg ; only I wish they would supply the inmates with the Word of God. I found my last year's permit was quite sufficient to enable me again to enter the prisons, and must add that the governors are usually courteous men, who really seem to take an interest in anybody who is trying to help the prisoners. They were only too pleased to permit us to distribute the Scriptures.

I visited the Fortress of Peter and Paul, where the political prisoners are confined, and interviewed the old general who is the director. Part of the old prison where Peter the Great imprisoned his own son is now in course of demolition. I did not ask for permission to see the dreary dungeons where often innocent men, and others who are never tried, languish for years, for I knew I should be refused ; yet from his daughter, who accompanied us to different parts of the fortress, I learned much of the sufferings and some of the sorrows of these unfortunate men.

The lady did not know that I was retaining all she told me, nor will I abuse the confidence she placed in me ; but

this much only will I say—that when asking her somewhat closely of the discipline and system pursued in this dreaded and mysterious prison, she said, 'No one visits them at all; no one can ever see them, except my father.'

Such has been the history, so far, of my journeys to the 'Prisons of the World.' Much yet remains to be done. I trust to be spared and strengthened to further prosecute this work, and pray that if I issue another volume it may alike tell of the goodness of God in caring *for*, meeting the needs *of*, and saving *even*, these outcasts and pariahs of society.



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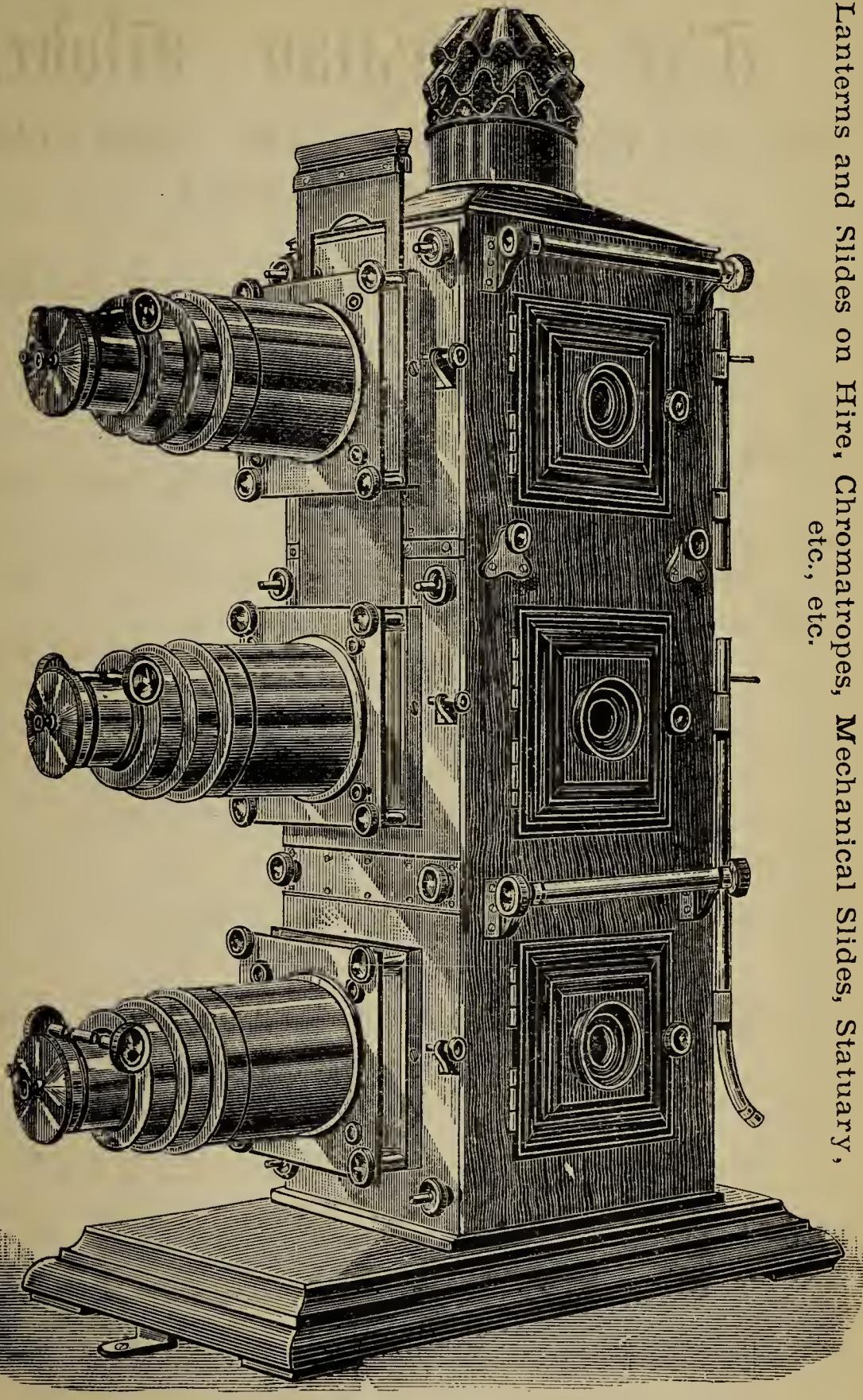
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